The Geometry of Suffering: A Surgical Inquiry

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Introduction

It has been three years since I have picked up writing once again. During this time, I have focused heavily on my practical needs, while also formulating the order of this book you now are reading. It has been a very painful, introspective, and intense period of time for me, because I have set upon myself the task of attempting to live my philosophy rather than simply conceptualizing about it. What I mean here is that it is through my brief time of respite that I have experienced a growth of sorts relating to the *Geometry of Suffering* as a project.

With that said, I have tasked myself with a very heavy undertaking in this treatise - of which I will explain briefly the premise. There are four sections here; namely originally produced essays of over one hundred pages each that signify a portion of my philosophical endeavor. Each section of this book deals with aspects of ontology, metaphysics, and a series of deep-dives into the nakedness of truth that lay before us.

We are lowly creatures in that we seek out any possible avenue towards self-liberation, even if it means deluding ourselves. Paradoxically, our efforts only serve to enslave us further to our own predispositions, prejudices, and lack of insight into the world around us. This is okay, because once we realize our lack of intuition the more we are able to be honest with ourselves. Doing so will only allow us to make a conscientious decision to face the truth of the pain of existence before us.

I thought heavily about what I was going to write in regard to this book that hasn't already been said. It has been a monumental undertaking, especially considering that I developed an entire cosmology within four hundred pages.

It was out of necessity that I became a writer, and it is through this inevitability that I continue to this day. The layers of suffering must be peeled back for us to drive home the point that we need to think more constructively regarding our ambiguous nature.

There is a lot to cover in this book, and I will let you, the reader, specifically engage with it as you see fit. Should you decide to read random chapters that is okay because there is a continuum of information that is present in any given section of my work. Once you have gotten a firm grasp on one concept, the rest will simply fall into place. I only ask that you question not only my assumptions, but your own regarding the nature of reality, consciousness, the will, and the meaning of death.

To say that this has been an exhausting journey is an understatement. I will speak plainly: this work is meant to challenge you as a reader to not only assume personal responsibility for change, but to develop a clearer way of viewing those darker corners of our minds.

When I say that we are viewing darker corners of our minds, I am not stating anything other than a real need for self-reflection, and conscious awareness. We are ambiguous creatures in that though we crave purpose, meaning, and awareness of ourselves, we do not wish to stray too far from the beaten path of ideology.

Ideology, I my estimation, only serves to destroy the individual from the inside out. It is also through culture that we develop various neuroses which plague us continuously throughout our lives as a result of our total immersion into construct, and image. When we strip ourselves of our own fantastical views of ourselves, and deny these constructs, there is then a pathway to self-discovery that cannot ever be taken away by anyone.

Existence is painful, hard, and unsatisfying intellectually. This should not stop us however from taking on the mantle of bravery, and bracing ourselves for the true pursuit of freedom found in death-awareness. It is through the death impulse that we cultivate a bounty of self-knowledge that is beyond any normal education we have ever received. It is with this said, that I leave to you this body of work – The Geometry of Suffering, to guide you on your own path to self-liberation.

Thomas Sheldon MacDonald

Essay On Self-Awareness and Despair

Preface

"We know that unconscious factors cause us to engage in certain forms of activity, to become insane, to fall asleep or to remain sleepless, to love a certain type and to remain frigid to another. They influence our methods of reasoning, making us at times illogical and one-sided, stubborn and unjust. In other words, our entire life is influenced, if not entirely determined, by unconscious factors."- André Tridon, *Psychoanalysis and Behavior*.

Self-awareness is the basis for our expression of consciousness as individuals, and is a profound experience which can only be understood by the subjective nature of the mind. We can objectify self-awareness in the sense that we all experience it in a similar way (regardless of the subjective nature of internal processes). Doing so does not change the fact that we all process the world around us in a subjective manner in which we are bombarded on all sides by symbolism, and imagery of the mind.

The unconscious mind is but one force that works towards the theme of self-awareness, and this is because it always influences us so powerfully. When we are free of our prejudices regarding life, we are at our most authentic, and this is shown through the unconscious processes that the mind goes through.

The authentic here is a representation of the deconstruction of constructs of what is socially, and individually acceptable according to social standards. What I mean is that there is a point where when we are not aware of our thoughts that we truly process the world around us in a primal way. To become authentic is an argument that requires the belief that stripping oneself of outside mores, and restrictions regarding self-awareness is a benefit to the individual.

According to authors Otto Rank, and Hanns Sachs, in their work *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences*, "The knowledge of the real unconscious meaning and its comprehension, is neither alike with all symbols nor does it remain constant during the course of development and change of significance of the same symbol. Further, the comprehension of the symbol is different within a circle of culture holding about the same content of consciousness, according to the fields of application, the stratum of population in which it appears and the mental condition of the person using it." Our focus on symbolism within the unconscious is something that needs to be expanded upon, especially because we are set on exploring from this angle the purposes of our consciousness in general.

The unconscious factors that André Tridon speaks of directly influence the conscious experience of how we live on an objective level. We find ourselves in a vast space of information gathering when it comes to consciousness, but this is because we are exploring something so profound that has many layers to it. Consciousness has not been fully explained, understood, or expressed on an objective level because it is still so mysterious to us. As I have mentioned in several of my previous works, we know the science behind consciousness to an extent, but there are missing pieces to the puzzle that we simply do not currently have access to.

Our memories change throughout time, and our ability to understand cognitively the world around us also changes as well. Dr. Sigmund Freud, in his work *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, states that "As it is known that the memory exercises a certain selection among the impressions at its disposal, it would seem logical to suppose that this selection follows entirely different principles in childhood than at the time of intellectual maturity."

As we mature through various stages of life, we discover more about consciousness on a subjective basis. Our lives often change dramatically throughout the months, years, and decades leading up to the various stages of growth for us as individuals. It is in this light that we can see the patterns that are shaped for us regarding awareness.

Our memories are also distinct in that they are directly the result of objective truths that mesh with the subjective experience of the individual. When we think about it, it is observably true that we can know that our own realities are the result of objective, and subjective experiences. We feel it in our very bones as being a self-evident truth, alongside the will to live. These forces are powerful in that they stem naturally from us on a fundamental level. The nature of our very being is composed of those things which exist on a fundamental, as well as subjective plane of existence.

Self-awareness brings with it a surmountable level of responsibility that is conferred upon the individual from birth. This responsibility is powerful in that it can prove to be either beneficial, or harmful to us as sentient beings. We have a choice, albeit limited to the contextual, and situational factors highlighted in our lives, to continue to move forward through this life, or to die a lonely death.

These factors exemplify the tone of this text, and elevate what we do know about consciousness to a place in which a theory can be developed. This theory is fundamental to any starting point for this book. This is so because without a conceptualization of consciousness, the will, or the death impulse, there can be no further inquiry (on my part) into what I am searching regarding human motivation, and behavior.

Human behavior, therefore, begins, and ends, with a study of the will towards survival, and the death impulse. This is of course all within the context, and paradigm that I am presenting here in these writings of mine. Other theories, ideas, and thoughts are recognized here as existing in a valid space whereby my own contributions pale in comparison to the established works of greater writers than myself.

Nonetheless, I will presently utilize whatever resources, and faculties that I possess in order to explain the foundation more perfectly regarding my philosophy. This I shall do in each of the chapters which are divided by

subject with an emphasis on the commonalities between each factor that will be discussed.

Self-awareness is also conceptually linked with environmental, biological, and imminent forces, all of which contend for a greater influence upon the individual in question. In the beginning of our journey toward understanding consciousness, we must be willing to realize that we do not need to limit ourselves to the objective alone. The subjective is equally important, and plays a distinct role in how consciousness is organized. It is with the awareness of opposition in life that we can begin to grasp the fundamentals of how survival, and death, play a vital part in the condition that we find ourselves in as human beings.

These concepts are indeed the very backbone of my philosophy regarding the will, death, consciousness, and the unconscious. It is through introspection, and then the writing down of these ideas, that I have conceived of a unity of a conceptual nature which is palpably visceral. In the relative dullness of our intellect in the scope of the cosmic nature of reality we still must strive to learn that which to many is a curse: i.e. the idea that our world is shaped by suffering almost exclusively. What I mean by this is not that there is no pleasure to be found in the world at all, it is just that suffering is at the very core of our humanity in retrospect.

Indeed, it is with suffering that we find ourselves transformed from one phase of life to the next. We suffer so that we can grow, and not stagnate. Not only that, but we are beholden to embrace our sorrows in such a manner that we are able to overcome our previous state of incompletion. Each phase that we go through in life teaches us something new about ourselves. This is true especially as we age, and find ourselves concerned with things such as one's own physical health, as well as those around us who we care for. When we realize that we are bound for the deterioration of aging, we are also able to come to terms with the ever-present reality of death, and dying. What we thought we had learned in our youth has turned out to be a farce. As human beings we are haunted by our

own lack of insight into the inner workings of our mind in preparation for death.

Psychologically, we are bound to factors which are presently before us; namely, those things which have been nurtured inside of us since birth, and socially conceived ideas of the truth which we ham-fistedly hold onto for dear life. We are clumsy creatures regarding our intellectual capabilities because, although we have achieved a great deal of advancements in the sciences, we still do not have a complete and fundamental understanding of consciousness as it is represented to us.

Representations, therefore, provide small windows in which we can see a portion of reality before us. These windows of knowledge are found in the subjective experiences that we all share as part of the greater human family. We are able to make sense of some of the information we gather about the outside world through our interactions with others, and through educational settings. A whole host of ways exist whereby the individual may find it suitable to apprehend information, and adapt it to their own skill sets of knowledge. It is with this in mind that I propose that the very essence of my philosophy rests upon not only my own individual theories, but as representations of symbology that strikes at the heart of the human soul.

Reality is constructed from various sources, and this is inclusive of our perception, and ability to peer into our unconscious mind. What I am saying here is that though physical laws are at the forefront of what remains to be seen as true, we must also consider our subjective experience as being a central part of that reality. The world, being as it is, cannot be fully perceived without the subjective look into the mind of the individual in question. None of us can ascertain the truth of the world around us without subjectivity playing a role for us to take upon ourselves. We must wear the mantle of the subjective as we roam through this world, and this is especially so because of the way that we interact with others. Perhaps this is one of the great tragedies of mankind; that we cannot fathom the depths, and fullness of the truth concerning reality.

Nonetheless, we must press on, and consider that both the subjective, as well as the objective, both exist simultaneously for each one of us as human beings. This is a consideration that is inclusive of everyone throughout the world, regardless of the environmental situation, or context one finds themselves living in. We are united in our suffering regarding the nature of reality, and our inability to perceive it beyond the standard scientific accomplishments we have inherited. We know that matter exists because it can be observed, and in turn, can also be verified by anyone that witnesses it. What we do not know is the extent of consciousness, and how it ultimately shapes our perception of a world that could be quite different from how we experience it.

To clarify, I mean that we are currently unable to understand the depths of consciousness in a way that can be fully rectified with our perceptions of reality. We know what it is like to experience colors, sensations, and so on, but we must ask ourselves what all this truly means for us. This is where self-awareness steps in, and allows us to perceive to a degree the world around us, and become unconsciously paralyzed by the suffering surrounding us. The world, as Schopenhauer suggested, is full of suffering, and this is what life consists of in its purest essence.

It is through suffering that we experience the distinction between truly living, and merely existing. If we are content with merely existing, we will soon find ourselves beset on all sides by the nature of life which consists of imminent pain, and anguish of all stripes. On the other hand, if we focus only on that which is of the nature of suffering, we will then not be able to withstand the trials, and tribulations that life places before us. In either extreme, we will find ourselves upended by these trials, and find ourselves contemplating the true nature of human weakness. These factors, when looked at from a distance, can place us in a mental state of despair because of the conceptualization that takes form regarding the ever-present nature of suffering in our lives. In my previous work, *The Tragedy of Sentience*, I suggested that this is a foundational point of despair.

Symbolism allows us to not only peer into the unconscious, but to express that which is unable to be articulated by words alone in any language. This symbolism is evident throughout human history, and has provided us all with a way to glimpse into the mind of the collective consciousness (as it may exist). We cannot continue to investigate those lurid aspects of humanity without realizing that we, too, are at the mercy of the symbolic in the sense that we cannot function without it.

The way we function in society is how we are ultimately able to provide ourselves with a way to make sense of the subjective, and symbolic. By this, I mean that the more well-adjusted we are to our contemporaries, the more we can take advantage of our time here to contemplate these things. It can be said that mankind is at the mercy of its own slavery to convention, and this is where we must look at the contextual rather than the black, and white of any given situation.

Our lives are muddled with the grayness of the world, and this is so even when we consider the symbolic, and subjective. We perceive truths as such, but in addition to this reality, we also incorrectly perceive the world around us. We can never know the fullness of what this reality represents because we are stuck, as it were, in the limitations of humanity. These limitations drive us further, paradoxically, into the realm of theory, and idea, as well as the depths of despair.

On a philosophical level, it can be said that self-awareness is like a loaded gun, whereby we must continue to exist regardless of how dangerous the world around us is. Self-awareness holds the illusion of protection, because it provides the individual with some basis for knowledge that is irrefutable (such as the laws of cognitive science), yet it is limited by its descent into the abyss of personal biases, and clouded judgments. Regardless of how it is possible to be easily engaged with self-deception, our journey toward self-awareness begins, as is customary, from an early age. We are molded, and shaped by societal forces, of which we are born to be engaged with on a profound level. This profundity is influenced, in a sense, by environmental, as well as biological imperatives.

Introduction

"Psychologically considered, the symbol formation remains a regressive phenomenon, a reversion to a certain stage of pictorial thinking which exists among highly cultured people in clearest shape in those exceptional states, in which the conscious adaptation to reality, is either partially limited, as in the religious and artistic ecstasy, or seems totally annulled, as in the dream and mental disturbances." – Otto Rank, Hanns Sachs, *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences*.

The world around us is composed of many fundamental sources which align toward the objective, as well as factually known. These sources range from our understanding of physics, mathematics, medicine, and the psychiatric sciences. In addition to these sources, there are also the subjective, analytical, and symbolic to contend with in this world. Why is it that I am emphasizing the objective in a work that deals largely with the subjective? It is because the foundations upon which we stand today are enveloped by the fundamental truths that are found in the objective.

We cannot afford to ignore the truth of the matter, which is that our realities are composed of dichotomous forces that work in tandem with one another throughout our everyday lives. These forces range from the will to live, to the death impulse, and in between with the liminal spaces of non-being versus the experience of being alive. Indeed, it is with opposing forces of existence that we have a composite picture of reality before us, and this is evidenced through the integration of the subjective with the objective experiences of humanity.

In our time of need, we often find ourselves reaching out to others to help assuage our suffering. We also look toward the intellectual, and rational, to help assist us in some small way to figuring out our dilemmas. With this in mind, it is important to remember that we cannot come to conclusions about life without realizing the interconnectedness of everything that exists. We are not on an island by ourselves, although our

brains are secluded often by the subjective nature of experience. Everything that we experience has been, in a sense, experienced before by others, inclusive of the pain that we might go through.

Regardless of how connected we are to others; there is also a sense of solitude to be found in our conscious states. This solitude is magnified intensely by the individual going through distress, and it must be recognized that it is as powerful as the experience of connectedness. In the experiences of grief, loss, emotional pain, and mental illness, we are utterly alone because of the subjective nature of those states. Others may have experienced similar states to ours, but still that is not the same as having experienced exactly what another person has gone through. This is one of the paradoxes of being human in that we are simultaneously connected, and separated from others depending on the context of the situation.

Our sentience brings with it not only the responsibility of being upon the individual, but a profound loneliness caused by those aforementioned internal experiences. This loneliness is compounded by the fact that we are condemned to a form of freedom of being through the power of the will, as it exists. Though we are limited even in our freedom because of the forces of the world around us which police our activities, we still find ourselves on the precipice of decision making.

Whether we continue to live on in this world, or choose to die through suicide, we are condemned to experience all that we do even if it is in a limited sense (because of our relatively short lifespans). I say condemned because it is evident that no matter what we choose in life, (whether these choices bring us pleasure or pain is irrelevant) the outcome remains the same and that is the experience of the dying process.

Our awareness brings with it an understanding of mortality that is not just academic; it is utterly devastating to the individual on a subconscious level. This devastation brings us to our knees in the sense that it is something that we all must eventually realize lords over us, i.e. death itself. Even though we are going to be consumed by death at some point, we

must realize that we are still condemned, like prisoners, to live, and taste a modicum of freedom before we ultimately die. This condemnation is self-imposed, but also intrinsic to human experience, because it is so complicated to begin with.

This complication only represents the various dichotomies which exist due to our being alive in this world. It is through these dichotomies that we must etch out a life for ourselves regardless of the suffering which is ever present. As we do so, we find that we understand very little about the world around us. We know what we can learn from the sciences, and through our education in the world around us, but there are serious blind spots in consciousness which must be accounted for.

There must also be accountability on an individual level for the way we interact with the world. To clarify, I mean that though we are educated through societal means, we must allow for there to be a sense of individual expression of the will. The will, being primitive, is also very complicated at the same time. It is with the will that we experience the very basis for the dichotomies that exist in the world. These dichotomies offer a lesson to us in that we must learn that the world around us is gray rather than black, and white.

It is through the knowledge gained that life is complex, and nuanced, that we find ourselves able to begin to understand foundationally what the will consists of. As we live our lives, there is a continual battle for existence, and non-existence. This battle is found through the will to survive, as well as the death impulse. I have mentioned this conflicting state within the self in several of my past works, but I will touch upon it to a degree here. In the world as it exists, there are nuances which must be remarked upon, and those consist of moral dilemmas, ethical questions, personal conflicts, and mental states of being which vary individually.

The self is ephemeral in the sense that we cannot count on it in our times of distress, as it is the last thing to leave us when we are on our death beds. All our life can be dedicated to understanding death by simply living

this life with a reflective sense of being. We have the opportunity to look at common everyday occurrences and tie them into our understanding of death, and the dying process. By doing this, we are preparing for death in a way that is proportionate to our daily ruminations upon it.

Many do not think of death in a conscious way, and this is displayed in how there is a fascination with the cult of youth in modern society. This is not simply a feature of modern society alone, because it has been expressed in the past, but it is one that is increasingly becoming enmeshed within society as it stands. By observing the secular world around us, we see in entertainment a lust for life that is unlike any other, but it is misguided in that there is no reflection upon death.

Consciousness keeps us aware of our surroundings, and gives us a sense of place in terms of a basic understanding of the biology our bodies represent for us. We are, in a sense, locked in our bodies from a level of consciousness that surrounds us mysteriously. This mystery is composed of an inner truth which must be pondered upon if there is to be any headway in understanding the human mind. The inner truth that I speak of is the subjective, as well as the unconscious portions of our minds.

When we go through hardship, receive devastating news, or cannot continue to live as we had become accustomed to in times past, we are then ripe for understanding just how well and truly screwed we are. It is not just our situation that gives us pause to reflect on this truth, but it is also our shared situation with the rest of humanity that we are experiencing. This shared portion of suffering is our lot as human beings, and we must accept this in a stoic manner if we are to find any modicum of peace within our hearts. Nothing that we do can change the ultimate outcome of life which is to die in innumerable ways. This is not to say that we should merely despair. On the contrary, this realization can prompt individuals to look at life from a more balanced point of view.

The unconscious takes over when we are not actively aware of our surroundings, our situation, and our place in the world. It is a mental state

which brings with it sensational imagery, symbolism, and fantasies of all kinds that do not have a necessary correlation with the outside world. By this, I mean that the unconscious is always present, and is continuously nourished by the conscious experiences of the individual. These conscious experiences are reflective of our everyday lives, however mundane they may be, because we are forced to obey the laws of the world around us.

Our foundation as individuals is based upon sociological, environmental, and genetic components. Each of these realities serves to engage us in a way that allows us to become more acutely aware of our surroundings, and our responses to stimuli. Of course, we are not merely akin to bacteria or lower life forms because we have a degree of sentience which transforms us in the sense that we respond to the outside world in varying forms.

Suffering permits us to view reality from a more lucid point of view. What I mean here is that it is through suffering that we can see that life is full of it, and our metaphorical cups overflow with anguish in this world. As I have previously mentioned in other works of mine, there is pleasure in this world to be had, however intermittent it may appear to us to be. Still, the pain outweighs any sense of pleasure we could possibly have because those things are so fleeting for us as human beings. Our shared suffering is that we are aware of our surroundings, and can feel emotions that lead to complex scenarios in one's own life.

Even though it may seem like our suffering is our own, it is not. It is a shared suffering that aligns us with the body, and spirit of mankind. This spirit is not a metaphysical one, but is strictly concerned with the fact that we all go through some degree of suffering one way or another. Whether this suffering consists of physical ailments or mental illness, it is not important to make such a distinguishment. Our judgments as human beings are flawed, and our understanding of what is important in life is doubly so.

The world itself is not only suffering, but it is greatly influenced by the nature of it as a biological fact. We are condemned not only to the freedom of being, but we are also damned in our shared experience of suffering in general. This is the great communion of the human race; that we are leveraged out with suffering as something that always exists for us in one way or another. We have a unique connection with one another through our sentience, as well as the experience of suffering with the added feature of awareness.

Looking inward for answers allows us to navigate the world in such a manner as to fortify us in some strange way. Even though we may never have all the answers as to what consciousness consists of, we can interpret the world around us in a way that is highly individualistic. This individualism is present when we daydream, or fantasize about something that we think deeply about. It is in those moments of quietude (which we find ourselves rarely experiencing) that we come to realize that our capabilities for enduring suffering are tremendous.

It is in the nature of self-awareness for one to fall into the depths of despair, as well as the loftiness of idealism depending on the situation. We find ourselves mostly enslaved by the circumstances of our birth, of which we never had a choice but to exist in the first place. This does not mean that we cannot enjoy the various things which we are capable of enjoying. It simply means that from birth we have either disadvantages, or advantages depending on our scenario, environment, and societal upbringing.

We can imagine a world where suffering does not exist, but regarding this we are only capable of thinking about something that is illusory rather than real. Certainly, our imaginations can drum up the most fantastical of things which can eventually become solidified ideas, thoughts, and actions. Nonetheless, the world, because it is filled with biological life, will always be prone to immense suffering of some stripe. Our lives are accountable to ourselves, and in some cases, this affects others in a significant way depending on how we react to the world around us.

We must remember that we all will succumb to some form of misfortune in this world. This is irrespective of whether that misfortune comes in the form of economic, physical, mental, or situational means. There are plenty of examples of why misfortune is something that is more common than readily admitted, and one is that we are as humans prone to it because of situations that arise in life. Even though we must experience what we perceive to be a negative force (i.e. misfortune itself) we must also experience moments of power from within which show just how much pain we can endure as a species.

Indeed, this endurance is something which is inevitable in the human experience, and is one of those burning aspects of our lives which can be seen as purely emanating from the will itself. The will ushers forth a proclamation to us as human beings that comes from a profound place of desire. It is through desire that we loudly proclaim that we, too, are alive, and are willing to sacrifice everything for the attainment of our goals, however unrealistic these may be.

We are sociologically influenced by our behavior because of everything we have learned from social cues to the imitation of others. It is through the realization that we are simultaneously alone, as well as united with our fellow sufferers in this world that we become authentic. This authenticity derives exclusively from the power of endurance that comes from pain, and anguish. One of the most authentic experiences in this life one can have is that of losing a loved one. Whether it is a close acquaintance, a friend, or a lover, the context of the situation is irrelevant because it all deals with the same end result which is death.

Many in this world choose to ignore the significance of the drive towards death which is so prevalent in the unconscious mind. This drive, like the will to live, keeps us ever at odds with ourselves, and is a feature of conscious awareness. This awareness is automatically there, etching out messages to us in the form of dreams, imagery, and symbolism. Each of these aspects are characterized by the almost forbidden taboo thoughts of our subjective selves.

Death is still the great taboo, because though we may have scrutinized it thoroughly from a scientific point of view, we are still leagues behind in a conclusive understanding of it from thanatological, and psychological areas of study. To clarify, there is a medical, and clinical understanding of death, and there are other areas of study which must be looked at as well which hold great import for death in general as a phenomenon. Being self-aware also brings with it a scathing knowledge of death, and this is evidenced in the symbolism behind anything from marketing to general entertainment.

Everything we experience in society is geared towards a trace of death in that the shadow of the presentation we are given is always that of the morose. Bright colors, lively designs, positive sounding music, and pleasing art all are poisoned by the metaphorical cup of death. Indeed, everything we touch, experience, love, and hope for has an end in destruction of some sort. Our self-awareness brings us to this conclusion one way or another, even if it means that we experience it during the process of dying.

Life can be exceptional in the sense that we may be fortunate enough to find our most authentic selves. How this happens is a mystery because each person is a world onto themselves. Each person has to experience life for themselves, and this is so because there is so much subjectivity involved. This subjectivity springs forth from the unconscious mind, and those desires which are either expressed, or suppressed.

Whether we express, or suppress, our desires (and the will that springs forth from it), there is always something that exists beyond our control regarding consciousness. Think of all the times you have tried to stop thinking, and find some peace in your mind through meditating upon nothingness. All those times have been cloaked by the insidious nature of the conscious mind, and this is due to the fact that we have no way of permanently shutting off our thoughts. We can, like the sages of old, attempt to train ourselves in such a way that we control our thoughts to a degree, but this is not something that is common among humans.

We can never be certain of where consciousness will take us because we are continuously on the path of a unique lifestyle which is specific to each one of us. We all have situations, contexts that exist, and perceptual experiences which guide us into one way of acting or another depending on our situation. The influence that sociological situations have upon us is tremendous, and this is certain because there are no easy ways to escape one's own given condition. There are aspects of the individual which are heavily marked by the conditions that we are brought up in, and live in. These aspects do not show us anything other than what we truly are, which is to say that we are victims of the conditioning, and environment in which we have grown up in.

The various states of consciousness can be classified by how aware we are of our surroundings. To clarify, I mean that it is through self-awareness that we begin to see that we have the capability to conjure up truths regarding how we respond to this life. Our response is one that is profound in that it is involuntary, and stems from the unconscious mind. This is why we are so very miserable a great deal of the time.

We do not have a way to mute awareness other than sleep, or perhaps prescribed or recreational drugs. Still, even if we are able to maintain a sense of dullness of our consciousness, which cannot relieve our ability to respond to, and be aware of suffering on a fundamental level.

Even if we do not feel pain because of some artificial, or contrived means, we still experience the essence of anguish. Anguish is a feature of human experience, and it is an aspect which is ever present even when we do not actively feel its influences. Though we cannot take away the pain that we have felt in times past, we can analyze it in such a manner as to allow us to understand it better.

No individual has ever become wise in ignoring the fundamental truths of life, and death. We must be cognizant of this statement because it represents the whole of the essence of this body of work. This is why it is so important to reflect upon death.

Everything we are bound to experience has the influence of the will, as well as of death, in essence. This is shown over time, and time again with the various ways we try to distract ourselves amid the very real changes that ageing brings to us. We are weak creatures that cling onto the ephemeral in any way possible to avoid looking at death directly as a distinct reality. This reality is biological, but it is also psychological in that it affects us whilst we live.

Our lives are dependent wholly upon our reconciliation with the subjective, and objective realities. This being so, we can also determine that there are aspects of the human condition which force us to exist in various contextual senses with the dichotomy of existence in mind. There is the acausal, as well as causal, the night, and the day, and life, as well as death. In all things there are dichotomous forces which spring us up against the wall of truth which cannot be denied for long. We, as human beings, fight death with a tremendous force of creative self-willed ignorance of the truth.

As I mentioned previously, awareness is continuously surrounding us, and we cannot escape the grasp of our realities. No matter how hard we try, we will eventually come to realize that our lot in life is something that must be confronted with and seen for what it is; a meaningless battle against forces stronger than us. Death is the ultimate judge, jury, and arbiter of fate for us as human beings. This much is true. What we must also realize is that there are aspects to existence, and experience, which should be examined at length in order to understand the essence of what death represents for us.

Self-awareness, as it stands, is built upon the various structures which underlie human experience. We are destined for death, which is certain, but we are also destined for experience through cognizance for the duration of our lifespan. This is a cause of despair because of the fact that we cannot escape the hands of fate, nor of death. Our human condition teaches us that we are at the mercy of the world around us, and our limitations, as they express themselves in our daily lives.

Chapter One

On Self-Awareness as the Basis for Despair.

Whether we would like to admit it to ourselves, or not, we are ultimately at the brunt end of evolution with our level of self-awareness. We have inherited, as the human race, the very misfortune of being hyper self-aware. Why is it that I argue this? It is because we know that we shall die one day, and that everything we have ever cherished, or loved, will disappear from the face of the earth.

This starkness of reality is where humanity is bonded in complete submission to the feeble needs of the flesh, and mind. I have often described human beings as being likened to a puzzle. This is because there are pieces, or aspects, of reality which still have to be put together in order for us to solve the meaning of our experiences for ourselves. We cannot rely on outside sources for our happiness, nor can we even be guaranteed that we will find it from within.

Our feeble needs are to be nourished, to be loved, to be cared for, and to have assurance of continued existence where there is none to be found. I say feeble needs because these form a coherent foundation for what I call the baseness of the human condition. We are constantly in want of that which we cannot fully grasp onto, and this is inclusive of the paradigm that consciousness may be more than what we assumed it was at first to be. Our simple needs, which are of the aforementioned aspects, are dominating factors in our lives because we need an anchoring force on a foundational level.

The anchoring force of being is found through environmental, sociological, and cultural conditions irrespective of the individual. We are all in need of nurturing, care, and emotional regard. But what is at the center of all this? It is quite possible that even through love we may find a communion with death that is at first indistinguishable from life in the

common perception of things. It is life that gives us our share of sorrow, pain, and grief, but also those moments of peace, tranquility, and hope for a better tomorrow.

Though we are stranded in our relatively placid nature regarding a cohesive understanding of being, we occasionally find ourselves reflecting on death from the perspective of someone who has been directly affected by it in some way. When we think of the possibility of losing a loved one, or someone at least relatively close to us, we think of the absence of presence more than that of the experience of death itself. This aspect of grief is what I call contextually discerned experience through the primitive nature of the death impulse.

Edward J. Kempf, in his work, *Psychopathology*, says that "the natural course of the individual who has an average organic constitution is to develop a functional capacity that acquires from its world the material that gives it a state of virility, goodness and happiness. If it cannot adapt itself so as to attain this state, its affective requirements have been unfortunately conditioned through the influence of associates, particularly the adults who raised it." This further provides an example of how we are conditioned to personify who we feel we are as human beings, even if our needs are not being adequately met.

It is in the details of humanity that we find ourselves becoming even more lost in our cognitive awareness. We are biological creatures that require a certain depth of connection which is only found rudimentarily in most of nature. This connection goes beyond familial or friendship bonds that form throughout life. It is one in which we see that we are influenced by the primitive, as well as the nuanced, and advanced. If we are to dissect things further, let us suppose that we encompass in truth those factors which cause us to be singled out among the rest of the creatures on this planet. If we make such a supposition, we are not stating that we are superior in any sense. In truth, it is the opposite that is being claimed.

Kempf continues on to describe in a later passage that "The nature of the biological struggle of the individual is determined by what the wishes or autonomic cravings need in the form of stimuli and what the social environment offers." He is stating here that we are at the mercy of our biology, and that our very environment is specifically geared toward either having us attain those needs, or to deny us them.

There is no escape from this biological struggle whilst we live, and this is because there is only death in the end as respite. Our problems, trials, and tribulations all come together to challenge us, and our will to survive these hardships is continuously being tested. Within all of this chaos we find that purpose is something that must be created in order for there to be any meaning in the suffering we experience in our lives. The more we live, the more we suffer, and this is inclusive of mental anguish just as much as physical pain.

Even though we are destined to age, decline, and eventually die, our awareness of these facts miraculously still allows us to continue living our daily lives. We are almost unmoved by the morbid truths ahead of us, and this is done either through ignorance, or willful choice. To clarify, I mean that though we are consciously aware of our mortality, many of us live as if death were not a main issue to focus on. This can be seen as a defense mechanism within the individual because of the fact that there is a willing denial of death in the way certain behaviors are displayed.

We are destined to be enslaved by our biology, and also our subjective experience of this life. We can know facts, figures, and objective truths about the world to the extent that we have senses to recognize them. It is also true that we process information on a level which is extremely subjective, and often muddles the objective realities we face with the world of symbolism, and thought. As we go through life, and experience the things that we do, we are likely to conclude that at the very least, there is a subjectivity to purpose which is neither black nor white. This subjectivity is based on how we process information cognitively, and is displayed as something which is highly individualistic in nature.

It is not just experience which leads us to believe that suffering is paramount in our lives, but it is also the dichotomy of the objective versus subjective. This distinction maintains that there are multiple layers of reality, of which, consciousness is but one of these. Consciousness, being the reason why we suffer as we do, keeps us continuously aware even if only on an unconscious basis of the impulse toward death. This impulse, as previously mentioned in several of my works, is not necessarily an active conscious one, but an aspect of humanity which is realistic in its realization of the truth that we must also die.

Suffering, and pleasure, therefore, become unified through the layers of reality which are dichotomous in nature. These layers include symbolism versus concrete reality, life versus death, peace versus war, and pleasure versus pain. The symbolism versus concrete reality is focused specifically on how we process information versus the objective truth before us. Life comes before death, and is connected with it on a fundamental level. Peace versus war relates to conflict on a bigger scale than just the individual, but remains fundamental because conflict begins at the level of the individual. Pleasure, of course, is ephemeral, and therefore can be accounted for as something less than that of pain, or even boredom, which can lead to anguish.

As we venture into our inner world of the subjective, we are able to see that from a primitive viewpoint all our desires are one and the same as the rest of humanity. At a base level, we have to have our needs for safety, comfort, and love fulfilled in order to progress on a psychologically balanced mode of existence. The subjective comforts as well as causing a great deal of anguish, and this is because of the fact that we experience a rudderless void of sentience that is not wholly akin to the objective. This causes an existential questioning of what the truth deals with regarding subject matter more pressing than the paying of bills, taxes, and rent. Our whole being is dependent upon how we introspectively look at things, and process the world around us. By actively approaching life from the paradigm that we are destined for death, we can then choose authenticity.

According to Dr. Otto Rank, in his work *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, "The essence of neurosis, and of all higher mental qualifications, comprises a special activity of the imagination which is primarily manifested in the play of the child, and which from about the period preceding puberty takes hold of the theme of the family relations." This can be interpreted to mean that what is peculiar to us as individuals, inclusive of our faculties of cognition, stems from our youth when we are mainly preoccupied with the stability of our base needs. Our family, in this instance, is the centre where these base needs are supposedly met. I say supposedly because there is no guarantee that the need to be unconditionally regarded, or cared for in a nourishing way will be met.

We are all neurotics in the sense that we find unique, and individualistic ways to fend off thoughts of death. Similarly, we are at the precipice of our own will, and desire when it comes to the realization of the awfulness of the truth. Our lust for life is one in which it is tainted by the poison of truth, which is that our days are numbered, and we have no clue as to which day will be our last. By this poison we are forced to succumb to our own demise day by day, and hour by hour. Self-awareness, therefore, is one in which the encompassing truth of death becomes known to the individual.

Indeed, it is through our childhood, or even regression towards childhood on a psychological level, which brings us to the conclusion that even our base needs cannot quench those burning questions within the self. The self, being a construct, is focused on meeting the base needs common to all humans, as well as psychological needs on an individual basis. Without the foundation of environmental, biological, or sociological forces working in tandem with the other, we would not have the foundations for the will to survive as we currently do.

Death, being natural, is akin to non-existence in the sense that there was once a time when we did not think, need, want, or desire. We have gone through ageless eons of non-existence, and now suddenly here we are. Beyond basic biology, this is a mind-blowing concept.

When we were once nothing, there was no possibility for concern regarding anything the mind can think of. It was a vast void of non-being which connected us with the moldering substrate of the universe. Now that we are here, and conscious, we are faced with the possibility that our sense of being will be destroyed at the moment of our deaths. I do not mean to take any great steps into a metaphysical argument for permanence in the conscious state, so I will continue to describe death as an end to all things.

The universe is so vast that we cannot begin to fathom its depths, and this is because we have limited access to reality and what it consists of. This limitation does not inhibit us from learning the sciences, and information which has been corroborated as true from our forefathers in the distant past. What this does inhibit us in is the lack of ability to even fantasize about the possibilities that the universe has in store for not only us, but the rest of the world. Yes, we can imagine a tremendous number of things, inclusive of the origins of the universe, and those theories which lay behind it all, but we cannot imagine the profundity of it all. We are simply too limited to do so.

Our limitations keep us from experiencing the truth regarding the fullness of our nature outside of the biological imperatives that exist. These limitations confound us, and keep us in the dark from truly understanding what it is that we ultimately represent on a symbolic or abstract level. The symbolic, as I have described it here, is part, and parcel of the subjective mind. Within the subjective mind we gather the information that is provided to us, and utilize symbolism to our advantage on an evolutionary level. Imagination, and creativity, are all central focal points to understanding these aspects of the human mind.

It is with creativity that we survive in our surroundings, and find ourselves overwhelmed by the power that the mind represents. It is within the mind that we have the power to make decisions, to choose to live or die, and to choose to believe in the value of our lives as well as that of others. When we think about our ephemeral nature, we can then come to realize that our conceptualizations of reality are often patently false.

These theories that I propose regarding human life are simply representative of a gathering of ideas that are related to one another by virtue of existence. We exist; therefore, we suffer, yet also experience moments of tranquility, or ease of mind. We are in the midst of a great upheaval of consciousness because we live in evolutionary times. By evolutionary times, I mean we are continuously evolving mentally, and physically as a species. It is through evolution that we are able to keep in mind our limitations as individuals, and this is evident by the fact that we are sociologically conditioned in an evolutionary way as time marches on. What was true in the past, is not necessarily so in the present. I do not mean laws of physics, or mathematical principles here. What I am stating is that our perceptions have evolved over time.

The evolution of being is something which is based on the principles of psychology. Psychology, being a field which is ever growing, adapting, and existing as a discipline in its own right, allows us to see through the veil of the human mind. It is through this discipline that consciousness is scrutinized in such a manner as to apply to it mental principles which are innately human. These principles maintain us balanced in the sense that we are directly influenced by psychological foundations. When we experience phenomena such as mental illness, we seek out tools to help us survive the onset of disorder within the mind. These tools are based on sound principles of science, such as seeking out a therapist, or receiving psychiatric supplementary care.

The scientific principle of death is that we cease to exist, our brains die, and we physically become corpses. This principle is one that must be understood on a profound level in order to build a foundational meaning for this life. We must seek out to continuously fortify ourselves with general knowledge regarding death so as to have a better intellectual understanding of it. Thanatology is one discipline with respect to death that is currently becoming more developed as time goes on. Understanding the experience of death from a detached point of view can go a long way when considering the acceptance of it by the individual.

As we fortify ourselves against the stream of the everlasting truth of this world, namely death, we come to realize that at some point it was all for naught. Every moment of joy, every healthy breath we take, and all the sorrows of life are reduced to mere ashes in the wake of the human experience. Death is the great catalyst to living to the fullest. This may seem paradoxical, but it is clearly not. For what else do we have in our possession of knowledge that influences us quite like death? There is nothing that I know of that can compare with the knowledge of death as a phenomenon.

We cry out in the wilderness of this world, and search in vain for answers to the meaning of life. Then, at some point, we die. That is our story, and our legacy regardless of what we have done in our lives. Certainly, there is no denial here that temporal legacies exist, yet, in the broadest sense these do not apply here because they are not of the eternal.

Everything that we know is destined to be forgotten at some point in time. This much is a fact. Once the human race dies out completely, which at some point it undoubtedly will, we will no longer have a legacy to look back upon. The forces of nature will eventually overtake mankind's creations, and force the overbrush into every nook, and cranny of life's memorials. Each one of us will face eternity at the moment of death, and all things will have already been lost to us forever. This loss is permanent, and cannot be brought back in any way, as the body has been destroyed completely in death.

At some point, the entirety of the Earth shall be one giant graveyard in the cosmic scheme of things. Pyramids, temples, churches, and civic buildings will eventually crumble or be buried underneath new vegetation long after we all cease to exist. Even books will hold no significant value, as they will also be destroyed by the ravages of time, and dust. Truthfully, it can be said that everything we have ever known will eventually be completely, and utterly destroyed. Let us keep this in mind as we delve deeper into consciousness, and our understanding of being. Our consciousness, and general awareness, are dependent on this knowledge.

When we delve deeper into the possibilities of the construct of the self, we realize soon enough that we have the ability to re-create our lives through the power of the will. It is the will which gives us pause to look at life from a more nuanced perspective. This perspective keeps us honest with ourselves in that we then can then realize that everything we know about our lives is patently false. What I mean here is that it is the construct of the self which has been built up for us in this life, and it is easily disassembled by the mind when deeply, and profoundly, meditating upon it. We think we know the answers as to who we are, but in the end, when (and if) we are fortunate or unfortunate enough to live to old age, we will soon realize that our identity is as fluid as anything else in this world.

There are gray areas to life which present themselves to us on a daily basis. These gray areas are numerous, and consist of moral judgments, ethical conundrums, and interpersonal relationships, as well as the general behavior of the individual. When we consider all these things, it becomes clear that we can only act in our best interests, or in what we perceive to be our best interests as all things are concerned. There is no doubt that philanthropy exists, as this is demonstrated daily through the kindness of others, but we also must look at the possibility that we are also wired towards selfishness.

As we age, we progressively are able to see things from perspectives which we had not considered in our youth. It is from these new, fresh perspectives that the individual is able to grow exponentially on a psychological, as well as foundational level. One of the great mysteries of life shows itself when we are continuously being challenged regarding our beliefs, convictions, and ideas of reality. Human rights, for example, are also being challenged around the world on a consistent basis. There is an evolving idea of self-sovereignty which is not ecumenically received throughout the world. In old age, we think of not only the possibilities of time which has escaped us, but also of those things which we would still like to do whilst we live. This sort of thinking can also happen in one's youth to a degree, and this is shown by individual temperaments early on.

Self-awareness is the *basis* for despair, regardless of how some of us may choose to look at the world, and life, around us. We can find ourselves getting lost in the discomfort of not knowing what the future holds, or what is in store for us after death. These concepts can bother us to the point that we become distracted in a fundamental way. Our psychological makeup is continuously being challenged by our understanding of this life, and the lack of insight into purpose, and meaning.

There is a certain heaviness in feeling to the concept that we are uniquely positioned to wonder about our purpose in this universe. This heaviness of feeling is part of a feature of human experience that is unique to us specifically. We experience nuance in this world, and in our daily interactions with others. There is no black, and white here. Ultimately, it is up to us to decide how we are going to look at the world, and our flaws as human beings. These flaws are characterized by a lack of insight into purpose, and meaning.

Other than the construct of the self, there is no other way to remediate the problems presented by life than to re-create one's own individuality from the ground up. Doing so, of course, is psychologically dangerous because it represents the upending of the foundations of the individual. Each one of us is fragile in the sense that psychologically we can easily be harmed in our views of life. It is through this harm that the individual then can exhibit signs of mental illness, or some other malady of the mind which is now rudderless.

It is in this rudderless reality that we find ourselves struggling day to day to etch out some form of meaningful existence. Some of us find purpose in our careers, whilst others look toward childrearing for meaning. Others merely exist, and attempt to fill the void of being with meaningless experiences, and various temporal distractions. This is why self-awareness is not only the basis for despair, but it is the foundational starting point for suffering which can only be experienced uniquely by the individual in question. Each one of us has the capacity to receive a great deal of suffering, and experience unbelievable pain.

Chapter Two

How Self-Awareness Defines Us as Human.

Human experience forces us to look at the world in a way that is beyond black, and white. There is a vision of life here that seems to be filled with chaos, and confusion. Even though this is the case, we find ourselves looking inward towards the perception of the self which is ingrained in us. This perception is part of what we represent to the world, and what we represent to ourselves. We have to be willing to look at the world from multiple angles in order to better understand where it is that we are coming from, and where we are going.

To be human is to be imperfect, flawed, and filled with self-deception at every corner of the Earth. This is our lot in the world, and we cannot do anything about it except meditate, or think on possible theories of being, and essence. There are many ways that we can deceive ourselves just by living out our daily existence. Some of these ways include having a false impression of one's own personality, or way of being, as well as looking at the world with myopic views.

We cannot afford to waste our lives in such a manner that we do not examine the essence behind what it means to be human. If we do not examine life from a more profound point of view, we are then destined to experience suffering in an even more pronounced way than if we were to choose to be more cognizant of our lot in this universe. The world owes us nothing, and the universe is indifferent to our cries of anguish. This is one of the first principles of life that we must understand in order to develop cognitively in a balanced way. As I have said, we tend to look at the world with a myopic view of life, and it can be said that part of that is beyond our control. The reason I say this is that we cannot be aware of everything.

Self-awareness defines us as human simply because it is a feature of the human intellect. We gather every ounce of energy we have into trying

to decipher our greater purpose in this world when we cannot find the answer to that question in the first place. All things which include purpose, and truth, are self-created experiences, thoughts, and ideas stemming from the mind of one who wishes to imbue their lives with meaning. What I am trying to say here is that it is from within that meaning appears, and it can only be from the construct of the self that purpose becomes evident.

This purpose, which is highly personal in nature, is set apart from the disposition of the outside world. This is because the outside world is unfeeling, uncaring, and indifferent to our base needs. It is through the power of the constructed self that we are able to determine the value of our own lives, and work. This is part of the great tragedy of existence in that we are, whilst we live, bound endlessly to the comforts that only individuals can provide for themselves. These comforts are psychological in nature for the most part, and do not involve material things as such.

Even if we were to assume that purpose, and meaning are elements of this world, we are engaged in actively deceiving ourselves. This engagement keeps us from finding true meaning, which is subjective in nature, and thus far away from being universal. Each one of us has a different purpose based on environmental, social, and genetic factors. These factors are solidified through our personalities, which are almost as varied as there are grains of sand in the world.

Our imperfections keep us humbled in the sense that we must experience our flaws for ourselves even if we deny those flaws publicly. We know ourselves more than we think we do, and we also know that there are features of our personalities which detract from the experience of purpose. Think of all those times where you have doubted yourself, and were uncertain about your place in this world. It is through times such as these that we must attempt to hold onto ideas, concepts, and thoughts which bring value to our lives. In daily life we are constantly being challenged on a psychological level to rise above our circumstances emotionally.

But there are no easy ways to explain how it is we are to rise above, as it were, and claim our stake in this world. Even if we accomplish a tremendous amount of work towards the betterment of humanity, we still have an ephemeral influence on the outside world. There are, of course, exceptions to this (to a degree), yet these exceptions are only temporarily so in the grand scheme of things. Our focus on this life matters a great deal because it is in what we search for that determines our outlook in general.

As we look toward the future, and the possibilities it may bring, we must also concentrate on the present because it is where we exist at all times. Our minds are such that we fret about both the past, as well as the future, and hardly find ourselves in the fortunate situation to be able to truly live in the present. We are continuously preoccupied with concerns that are often not certain to come to pass, and this is something which also detracts us from being able to live authentically in the present.

These scenarios of human thought are, of course, based upon the idea that we are continuously worried about what is to come, and also that which has affected us in the past. This is not to say that it is not valuable to look at the past as a learning experience for us. It is certain that it is. However, if we merely focus on the past in a way that affects us in our present state of being, then we will have missed the point of those lessons we should have learned about life. Similarly, if we fret about the future, we will not be able to successfully navigate our daily lives without a great deal of anguish.

It is through pain, and anguish, that we learn something valuable about ourselves; that we are not immortal, we are not perfect, and we are certainly weak in many respects. Though there are examples of greatness in humanity to be found in the annals of time, and through research, it is clear that even magnificent works of art or literature will crumble in the sands of eternity one day. This realization should easily provide a sobering attitude for the astute individual that is able to see just how naked mankind truly is under the vast starry skies. Humanity has always been in a state of constant change, adaptation, and evolution but we still are missing something vital.

The vital thing of which I speak relates to the judgment of the individual against the fullness of the truth that the universe represents. We are at odds with the universe in the sense that we believe we have solved tremendous mysteries regarding nature, and matter, yet we still do not understand consciousness. This is what is vital in life; the conceptualization that consciousness has an important role to play in the development of humanity as a whole. We have certainly made great strides throughout our relatively short history on Earth, but we do not understand beyond the basic biological explanation behind consciousness.

Is there something beyond the basic fundamental concepts of what we know to be true regarding sentience? I believe that it is possible, and it is certainly credible to think that consciousness could also be central to the uncovering of further mysteries regarding this life. Nonetheless, it is easy to understand why some scientists may be dismissive of any further talk regarding consciousness beyond the fundamentally known. This is understandable, because if we cannot measure something, or know for certain that it is replicable, how can we know for certain that something exists or is even real?

We know that brainwaves exist, and various technological advancements have achieved an incredible understanding of the brain itself. What is missing here is a look into the subjective side of consciousness whereby individuals form an impression of the world around themselves. The subjective, alongside the symbolic, provides ample grounds for the exploration of the mind. Human beings are lonely creatures in that we exist mostly inside of our own heads.

Even though we have the capacity to care for others, and empathize by nature, we cannot see the world as it truly is because we are stuck in our own view of what the truth of reality consists of. Beyond mere theory, it is easy to see how the subjective mind has the power to influence individuals as well as influence one's outlook on what is perceived to be reality. The subjective is powerful in that it can easily influence behavior, as well as our interactions with others in general.

Our reality is colored by many facets of circumstance, position, and points of view that are built upon the individual through subjectivity. It is through subjectivity that we find ourselves at the mercy of our minds. We can imagine the tamest of situations being very difficult, and there is a chance that we can become consumed with anxiety because of it. Anxiety here represents a formal departure from objectivity because of its reliance on subjective thoughts, ideals, and hints of possible outcomes that haunt us. As individuals we develop a certain strength of being from the subjective, and this is because we are often able to heal our mental wounds with thoughts of individualized positive regard.

Positive regard is not merely a concept, but a tool that can be utilized by the individual to help heal from painful experiences. When we are introspective, and decide to give ourselves positive self-talk, we are engaging in a form of healing which is broadly underestimated. By this, I mean that the very idea of self-actualization is found through this form of self-conditioning. It can be very consoling to have this sort of thing in one's own mental repertoire. The self, although merely a construct, becomes renewed through personal sacrifice, and meditation upon conscious awareness.

From ancient times, before the advent of written history, we can imagine our ancestors in a situation where they had similar thoughts to us regarding purpose. Undoubtedly there was a belief in superstition, as well as other imaginative ideas that helped with the existential survival of early humans. Some may have felt the same level of despair that many of us feel when we look out onto the vastness of space, and realize just how small we truly are.

Indeed, we are not only small, but hardly significant in terms of cosmic import. The same rule applies to other animals, vegetation, and even the very soil of the Earth itself. The weight of this realization is extremely difficult to understand because as a species we habitually seek out meaning in every situation we encounter. If we do not have cosmic importance, then it follows that we must create our own meaning.

The creation of our own meaning gives us pause to focus on those things which vex us about the world around us. We are continuously in a situation where there is conflict. This conflict is either directed towards us, or peripherally, and often prevents us from channeling the power of the will toward a self-directed end. The conflicts I speak of relate to internal mental anguish, external situations, as well as a combination of both subjective, and objective aspects of being.

Our ability to endure suffering is greater than we might first assume, and this is because our species goes through so much of it on a physical as well as mental level. To suffer is to understand on an unconscious level that we are connected fundamentally to one another by virtue of the pain we experience. Although we experience suffering in isolation through our own subjective way of looking at things, we still have a connection with others on a basic level which needs to be scrutinized further.

Through the experience of isolation, the individual is able to learn about their own personality, as well as psychological makeup. It is through introspection that there is a powerful advantage one can wield in this world, and this is because all self-evident truth emanates from within. We learn about the world around us, but it does not provide us with anything profound that we can understand about humanity other than facts, and figures. We are more than statistics. We experience feelings, emotions, and all sorts of connections are made with others through the power of the subjective.

Someday, there will be nothing but ruins as far as the eye can see along with a vast swath of foliage burying old buildings, homes, and centers of commerce. This is the ultimate apocalypse which is separate from individual revelation. What I mean here is that long after our deaths, all traces of humanity will be eventually wiped out amid the underbrush of flora, and fauna. This recognition is important because it provides each one of us with a certain accountability for our own destiny. We cannot control everything that happens to us, or even most of what occurs, but we certainly can decide to create meaningful experiences where there are none.

Our lot in this world is to suffer deeply on a psychological, as well as a physical level in some manner that is consistent with other biological life. Pain itself is positive, as Schopenhauer proclaimed, and this is because it is in the absence of suffering that there is a negative force. This force can lead to boredom, or even psychological distress because of a lack of positive suffering. This is not to say that suffering, and pain are things to look forward to. I am simply stating that pain is positive because it represents a force of change that affects each one of us on a profound level.

This profundity of experience keeps us honest with ourselves in that it becomes clear that through the endurance of pain we grow as individuals. We might not like this explanation, but it doesn't necessarily make it any less true. As I have previously stated, we have moments of pleasure in this life, it is just that the pain outweighs anything else we could possibly experience. If we are fortunate enough to die relatively peacefully in our own beds it will be enough to satiate the inner need for the reduction of suffering to nothingness.

To enter into nothingness is to concentrate on the void of non-being. This can be done through meditation upon our station in life, as well as visualizing what it might be like to experience the dying process on a personal level. When we allow ourselves to visualize, think upon, and reflect on those things which are of the nature of death, we can then begin to live authentically in this world.

What does it mean to be authentic? It simply is a statement that reflects the idea that we should follow our true will which stems from inner desires made apparent to us in our daily lives. The will, being powerful in itself, drives us toward life, as well as death. Both aspects of human experience are of extreme importance here because it is through living that we learn about situational awareness, and it is through a concentration on death that we become humbled as individuals. This humility is authentic because it stems from a place where there is an unclouded judgment on behalf of the individual. To explain further, I mean that once we choose to look at life, and death, as one and the same, then we become self-liberated.

Self-liberation is found through a conscious effort to grow as an individual on a psychological, as well as subjective level. These efforts are self-directed in that it is only through one's own personal drive that any change can be made. By realizing this great personal responsibility through action, we can create an antidote to the despair that exists due to understanding that the world is inherently meaningless. The world does not seem to have an ultimate purpose, or goal, other than continual expressions of life, and death in harmony with one another.

It is in the realization of our stark nakedness that we become truly humbled by our station in life. We are smaller than specks of dust in the cosmic scope of things, and our ability to rationalize the world around us doesn't do us much good when we think about it. If this seems pessimistic it certainly is. There is, I admit, a sense of hope to be found in self-directed goals, and through the natural wonder found in life. Death itself can be a manifestation of hope, and positivity when looked at from a mature point of view.

Cosmologically, we find ourselves in this dimension of being through each, and every experience of pain, grief, and hopelessness. It is through these three things that reality reminds us continuously of just how peaceful the void of non-being may possibly be. Before we were born there was nothing to hope for, nor was there any semblance of pain, and suffering. This is redemption; in that we shall one day find death, and embrace eternity with open arms rather than fear.

Everything in this physical universe consists of a cacophony of dying, and dead matter. Self-awareness keeps us cognizant of this truth, especially because it is formed from the very recesses of our own being from birth. Perhaps there is some profound truth to the idea that we can ancestrally understand death through a focus on the primitive aspects of our own thoughts, ideas, and feelings. If this is so, it means that we are cosmically connected with death on a psychological level, and can potentially understand our place in the universe a little better. It is possible that the symbolism we think of in our minds is connected with death as well.

We are human because we think, and because we are biologically, and evolutionarily of a species which has adapted an understanding of death as being inevitable. These aspects of our nature are fundamental in that they continuously exist for us behind the scenes at all times in our subjective minds. As I have mentioned before, there is a dichotomy between the objective, and subjective, and this is expressed also through us as human beings. Each one of us is tainted by our understanding of mortality, and every conversation, experience, and life event is reduced to this fact.

Nonetheless, we are here, we exist, and we live if only for a time in this world. There is suffering to be found in the understanding of our mortality. Even thinking about death is a form of internal suffering which is ever present with us. Our tears are not enough to redeem us, but they keep us sober, nevertheless. Only death can become our ultimate redeemer, but until then we must carry on, and live life with a self-created purpose. Self-education is an important ethical concept because it is through learning about the world around us that we are able to better make it through this life.

We must have foundations for ourselves in this world, and this is certain because we are often rudderless in the void of space, and time. If our foundations are built upon self-awareness, as well as personal research into the fundamental nature of the human experience, then we can face death stoically, and with peace in our hearts. It is here, within the moment that we find ourselves searching for the truth, that we can then come to realize that all things have an ultimate end.

In the void of non-being, there is a distinction that should be made in contrast to that which is objectively existing. This distinction is one in which individuals lose all sense of being, and there is no coming back from where we go. Consciousness, wherever it goes, is no longer an equation within the brain of the dead human. It is an aspect which can no longer be commented on, and this is because it is currently beyond the realm of current scientific knowledge. Because it is outside of our common knowledge, we cannot fathom what might happen to it after death.

As I have previously pointed out, there is no black, and white in the story of the human race. There are only gray areas where some things are shaded darker than others, and where we have to make daily decisions based on subjective facts. These subjective facts are tainted by the mind, and the way we process things because they were once objectively known to us. What I mean here is that the facts we come across in our lives are influenced so much by subjectivity that they become muddled. We can no longer know the real weight, value, or substance when it comes to the truth, and this is because of the subjective dimension.

The subjectivity we experience makes us simultaneously human, as well as prone to errors. We constantly make decisions that have serious consequences for them even when we are unaware of just how serious these may be. Some of our decision making is based on the inconsequential as well, and this is shown through the countless ways that we come up with ideas, thoughts, and actions that do not represent a heavy weight outside of our own direct sphere of influence.

When we look outside of ourselves, and truly attempt to make decisions that are based on objective facts, we sometimes find ourselves in a position where we do indeed make a change in the outside world. It is during those times that we may be challenged in our own thoughts regarding the illusory sense of control we possess. This illusory sense of control is one of the aspects of human experience that keeps us from ultimately killing ourselves. When we no longer focus on the illusory, we become filled with despair, and are unable to bargain with that which no longer exists for us.

Death, being the ultimate answer to our equation regarding the ephemeral nature of human existence, then becomes a symbol for the truth we must face. The truth represents that we are stark naked under the seemingly endless stars, and we are without foundation. As we are without foundation, we search aimlessly for that which will give us purpose. As I have mentioned before, we can create meaningful experiences, meaning, and purpose, but these things can only be individually crafted for ourselves.

Chapter Three

Reflections on Consciousness, and the Objective World.

Consciousness is an enigma, and it is also something which we have continuously pursued answers to in the history of mankind. It is throughout mankind's existence that sentient thought has been seen as being either taboo, or of a nature that cannot be fully understood. In truth, it is that conscious thought has gotten the better of us throughout time. We must choose whether or not we decide to investigate further those aspects of being which relate to conscious awareness. Our lack of insight into the matter does not seem to stop us from continuing to look into consciousness from both a scientific, and theoretical viewpoint.

The world around us can be objectively known, and understood, in a way that is both scientifically sound as well as mathematically calculated. The scientific aspect of consciousness is found in the search for neurons, synapses, and connections which are made in the brain, and can be studied from a physical perspective. Mathematically, it must follow that we are subjected to the physical limitations of this world which can be seen in an objective way.

There is no place here for god, or gods, in the sense that we have traditionally understood them. Everything we experience is the result of the chaotic forces that exist in this world that push our will towards action. Although we might find it hard to fathom the possibility that we are without a cosmic purpose, there is a truth that is revealed to us when we do consider it. This truth is based on the conceptualization that the cosmology of the world is not human-centric, and is indeed quite remote from being so. We have physical bodies which interact with the outside world, but the forces of being do not answer the questions that we seek.

Are we destined to live without a purpose? This is a question that can only be answered by the individual because it is through the strength of will

that we find ourselves overtaken by the power of the mind. The individual mind is subjective in nature, and is part, and parcel of the world around us in a fundamental way. This fundamental nature comes before the understanding of death in a way that it is both conceptual, and formative in how we view the world.

Our vision of the world is a lonely one because it involves an understanding of personal decision making that resonates only on a small level with the individual. We can only imagine what true reality might consist of beyond our senses, and this is because we can only see as far as our mind is willing to take us into said reality. There are only a few things that we can perceive as being true, and they relate to physics, mathematics, and scientific processes which are continuously being looked at, and scrutinized.

The conscious mind is damned to experience the world not as it is, but as we are able to experience it. What I mean here is that it is through our limitations that we know about the world, and can understand concepts relating to being. These limitations provoke us in a way that keeps us focused on those blind spots in human consciousness that cannot be accounted for. These blind spots are where consciousness resides ultimately, and this is because we cannot fully understand the true nature of what the self, or the construct of being truly consists of.

Our constructed minds are the result of environmental and biological factors combined with sociological aspects of human contact. It is through these things that we find ourselves locked into the limitations of human understanding regarding life, purpose, and cosmology in general. The cosmology of being represents far more than we currently understand regarding the truth of life. As we journey through this world, and experience those processes of the human lifespan, we learn pieces of the truth which can then be understood individually but not as a whole. We are not in a position to decipher the fullness of the world around us.

Because we are not in a position to decipher the entirety of the universe we inhabit, we fall into a sort of cosmic despair which can be felt by everybody. There is perhaps a certain pessimism involved with cosmic questions because there is only so much that we can quantify, understand, and relate with on a fundamental level. I keep on referring to the fundamental because it is with what we can know about the universe that we are able to find ourselves with some form of foundation to step on. What I mean by this is that it is through our search for answers that we find that there is a foundation available to us, and that is through scientific inquiry.

Science has only brought us so far in our quest for fundamental understanding of life, cosmology, and time. There are stopgaps within our understanding that can only be hoped to be resolved through theoretical ideas that manifest as part of a logical thought process. Even these stopgaps, however, cannot be understood at this time fully. We are currently able to process knowledge in a way that meets our expectations to a degree about how the universe functions. We have knowledge of theorems, ideas, and concepts that have helped us grow exponentially in the past one hundred years beyond our past understanding of the cosmos.

Still, we cannot determine why it is that we are here as conscious beings beyond the biological imperatives laid down through DNA sequencing, and evolutionary traits. This lack of knowledge keeps us from truly understanding the world around us. We are lost, and adrift away from any shore when it comes to our theoretical journey as a species. The more we understand the world, the less we truly are able to define consciousness because it is such an enigma.

Death challenges us because it causes us to be hyper-aware of the need to be present in any given moment. This is a psychological concept in that there are aspects of the human mind that can only truly flourish when one chooses to live in the moment. Perhaps this is one clue as to why some of the sages of old focused on the here, and now, rather than the past or the possible future.

Human awareness is cultivated throughout the process of an individual's lifespan. From birth we are aware of our surroundings to a degree, and we continue to learn throughout our natural years. This awareness takes us to mental places where we are able to cognitively develop as individuals, alongside the help of environmental, and other factors. Our socialization with others from an early age is crucial for us to grow into maturity successfully from a psychological perspective. The truth of being is only partially discovered in our lifetimes, and continues to be a source of contention amongst philosophers, and the scientific community at large.

Nothing we can do can change our way of thinking unless we will it to be changed through our innermost desires. It is through desire that the will is proclaimed as being supreme. Our thirst for knowledge keeps us discovering new theories, ideas, and thoughts regarding our place in the world as human beings. Each thought that we have allows us to continue to deepen our understanding of the world as it appears to us on a fundamental level.

Education can, of course, assist the individual in one's own journey toward this deeper understanding. Whether this is done through self-education, or through formal learning, there are aspects of science that can be understood ecumenically. This ecumenism of thought broadens our own awareness of the world, and simultaneously connects us with other perceptions, and objective knowledge. When we are connected to ideas that can be decidedly seen as objective, we anchor ourselves to a groundwork of understanding which is profoundly apparent to us.

This groundwork is the basis for our foundations in this world, of which the objective truth is but one facet. Subjectivism also plays a role in human perception because of the powerful symbolism found in personal abstractions regarding how we see the world as a composite reality. The composite reality that is created through objective, and subjective means, forms the basis for our sentience on a deeper level. To clarify, it is

necessary in this theory to broaden our knowledge through dichotomous forces.

Dr. Sigmund Freud, in his work *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, declares in the first person that "I cannot conceive why wisdom, which is, so to speak, the sediment of everyday experiences, should be denied admission among the acquisitions of knowledge. For it is not the diversity of objects but the stricter method of verification and the striving for far reaching connections which make up the essential character of scientific work." For Freud, when we look for these connections, and verify what we know through the scientific method, we recognize that there is a scheme by which we can absorb information as well as theoretical ideas coherently.

This coherence is found in a marriage of the known, and the unknown, as well as the utilization of logic, and reason to get to where we need to be intellectually. Everything exists in dichotomous scenarios. There is night, and day, life, and death, and everything in between. Psychologically, we must accept that there is a connection between the void of non-being, and that of life itself. This connection is played out in our world as that of being opposing forces, and this is rightly proclaimed to be as such. However, it must also be stated that without these opposing forces we would not have the dynamics of life as we know it.

Life will find a way. It always does. So does death. Everything we were before we were born was nothing but void, and did not consist of natural substance. When we die, we will return to this void which cannot be known, or understood, in purely objective terms. In other words, we will have crossed beyond known scientific knowledge into an indescribable absence of being. This is at the same time horrific, as well as an amazing thought, and this is because we will have ceased to exist as we know it.

Wisdom can be discovered through realizing that we are prone to error, and deficient in our own understanding of the nature of life. There are many questions that arise when we discuss the nature of consciousness, and this is shown through the many theories that underline its essential

nature. The essential nature of consciousness is not fully known yet, but we do have the physical sciences to help us understand cognition.

There is a symbolism that is always present in our understanding of objective truths. This symbolism is often abstract, and paints a picture of reality as being something both unique to the individual, as well as shared by the rest of humanity. There are aspects to the human mind that are connected with shaping our intellectual abilities in such a manner that we integrate conscious, as well as unconscious processes when navigating the physical world. It is in the physical world that we are destined to discover all that we can in our limited nature about objective realities. Objective realities are those shared, duplicable, and known factors of the causal world which we all can agree we are bound to at least on some fundamental level.

Similarly, there is a subjective reflex in the mind that prods us towards molding our understanding of reality into complexities that force us out of our comfort zones. By this, I mean that the subjective processing of information solidifies an additional dimensional quality to the human experience. Human beings are capable of understanding the world from multiple dimensions of thought, ideal, and expression. These factors push us toward a shared, yet isolated view of the world which simultaneously exists as another dichotomous force.

Idealism keeps us as human beings focused on those factors which are conducive to longevity, whereas the death impulse widens our view of experience to include that of those moribund processes that we will eventually succumb to. In truth, death is a liberating force for us because it opens up possibilities of a peaceful non-existence beyond the care, and worry of this current life. Nonetheless, it must be said that our idealism, instinct, and habitual nature only add to the impulse towards survival. Even though we know that we shall someday die, our impulse is to continue regardless of the eventual outcome.

Our foreknowledge of death presses us to discover new truths regarding the objective world. This is because we unconsciously realize that

our time here is limited, and so we must choose to educate ourselves regarding the nature of life, or not. This is a highly individualized choice because it involves personal agency.

When we shed ourselves of the excess baggage of assumptions, and courageously look out onto the world with an eagerness to learn that is insurmountable, we then can authentically begin to live in the moment. This is harder than it may seem because it requires one to shift one's mind away from reflecting on the past, or fretting about the future. By divesting oneself of the irrational, there is only the essence of reason, and logic remaining. This does not mean that the irrational should be ignored, or seen as something that does not have educational value. The mind can seem irrational at times, yet it is capable of tremendous discoveries in the realms of science, architecture, and art.

Aesthetics speak to us as human beings because we are drawn toward that which utilizes the subjective nature of the individual mind. Aesthetic qualities are as numerous as can be, and at the same time these things remain constant in our lives on some level. We can express ourselves through artistic means such as literature, painting, and theater, and these things are all well, and good. Yet, we must dive deeper into the manifestation of the aesthetic if we are to truly understand its influence upon us.

As the aesthetic is expressed in various ways inclusive of mode of dress, it is all-encompassing for us in a very credible way. What I mean by this is that our existential crises as human beings can find their way into our aesthetic choices in this life, and it can consume us profoundly. We are continually faced with one crisis after another, however serious or banal in nature. This is perhaps another tragedy of human existence; that we experience traumas on multiple levels irrespective of who we are, or think we are.

It is very humbling to imagine that an aesthetic is part, and parcel of human experience. This is because it is an outward manifestation of the

inner subjectivism which we experience individually. Because we all experience the subjective, it can be said to be an aspect of cognition that is universal in nature. It holds a place in the world, alongside the objective in a very tangible way.

We cannot speak of the objective without the subjective because both concepts are uniquely expressed within human experience. These things are evident in that we are prone to error even in promoting one theory over another, or in judging a situation (but not impartially.) The aspects of internalization through the subjective are as follows: each one of us individually thinks, and judges, and that the cognition of one's own brain interprets the objective in a specialized way.

This interpretation brings with it a flaw in that we cannot hope to perceive the objective with untainted eyes. We can know facts, and figures, but we often do not see their importance in our lives in a non-biased way. Our biases confirm our inability to rationalize the irrational. As a species, we are destined, it seems, to know only a peripheral portion of the truth behind the visible universe.

It is as if we were playing a game of chess, where the board is representative of a three-dimensional space. This space is where our minds operate, and the pieces are likened to neurons in the brain. We can only perceive what is on the board, but not what lies beyond the spaces of it. It also follows that, like chess, there are functional rules in place that cannot be violated. These are restrictions, and can be likened to the ones we experience in our day-to-day lives.

Returning to the aesthetic qualities of human experience, let us also think about the potential that it has to inform us of our own subjective way of experiencing the world around us. We navigate a world of physical matter which can be known through scientific scrutiny. This much is true. However, what is also true is that there is a distinction between human educational processes (such as early socialization), and that which is perceived in a specific manner by the individual. It is possible, in other

words, that my experience of color, taste, sight, and sound is far different than that of another individual. I may know that the color blue is supposed to be blue, but I cannot say with certainty whether or not someone else experiences that color in a different way. What I mean to say here is that individuals experience the objective in a very peculiar way.

There is a tremendous responsibility on behalf of the individual as to how the world is seen, navigated, and learned of. This responsibility stems from primitive desires within the constructs of the self that guides the will. If we do not choose to accept this responsibility, then by all means, it is something that simply does not have to be accepted. But by denying the responsibility of perception the individual deceives themselves. Our only tether to this world is through our perception, and this is found through the inner workings of the mind.

Many of the consequences that human beings face in life are related to constructs which are placed in our paths. These constructs range from laws to decrees, and everything in between on a sociological level. We are faced with an insurmountable number of difficulties that we must navigate in this life that are set up by other human beings institutionally. These difficulties are placed in our path irrespective of where we find ourselves in this world. All of us are bound to face difficulties which challenge us in the objective world. We, of course, internalize these difficulties, and sometimes make them out to be more complex than they truly are. This is part of human nature to begin with.

In addition to those constructs that challenge us are the natural, biologically founded realities that we must contend with. To explain briefly, I mean that we also have to deal with pathological realities that can eventually harm us, or even kill us. Diseases, viruses, and other health concerns are also obstacles in our way that keep us from being able to function properly. There is great sorrow to be found in this recognition of the truth about the human body. We are weaklings in that we easily succumb to illness, and even our mind is not safe from the effects of pain.

Regardless of the obstacles that prevent us from being able to function properly, whether these things are sociological in origin, or biological, we must concern ourselves with functioning at a base level. This form of functioning allows us to continue our search for purpose regardless of obstructions in our way. To be able to fight against the odds is a very human response to such maladies.

Though we cannot fully understand the nature of consciousness, we have a choice to continue on in this world despite the odds ruling against our favor. This choice is part of the limited will which manifests itself into reality through the power of individual desire. Desire keeps us motivated to challenge ourselves, and move forward with our lives regardless of whether or not we will succeed in our plans.

For every successful idea, theory, or concept, there are countless ones which are cast to the wayside because of flaws in logic or reason. We are, as I have previously explained, flawed individuals with characters that are even more precariously balanced against the fulcrum of existence before us. Against the enormity of the eternal, we become painfully aware of the inconsequential nature of our existence, and this is more poignantly seen during times of great suffering, and anguish.

The objective world is calculated, unfeeling, and of a nature which is mathematically, as well as physically distinct. This world carries us through our days as we grow, and mature as individuals. Because of evolution we are able to conceive of culture, theoretical complexities, language, and other related features of human existence. All of these things come together to form the fullness of what it means to be sentient. We cannot perceive this fullness of sentience even though we experience it to a great degree in our advanced state of evolution.

There is a tremendous sorrow to the realization that though we are sentient, we are not permanent in our state of biological life. Everything changes, including our bodies, and minds, over time. These changes profoundly affect us in a manner that allows us to perceive the whittling

away of time in front of our faces. It is through this perception that the stark reality of human nature unfolds in front of us. Death is all around us, and penetrates the very heart of all creativity, scientific inquiry, and societal progression. The unconscious mind rallies around death as a focal point that is beyond the stale abstractions that we are used to surrounding ourselves with. It is with these abstractions that we realize that there are severe blind spots in the perceptual abilities of our brains.

Chapter Four

How the Subjective, and Objective Work in Tandem.

The subjective, and objective are unique features of reality in that they compose a composite framework, or schema, to the fabric of the knowable. When we process objective truths internally, we then subjectively look introspectively to search for meaning in the physical world. These features bring to light the characteristics of multiple facets of reality which are experienced uniquely by us as human beings. Our ability to comprehend scientific concepts such as gravity, and mass, has changed irrevocably into a subjective form of comprehension.

All these concepts are very human because they require a bridging of perspectives that creates a composite reality for us. This composite reality is first, and foremost, dependent on human cognition. That is not to say that objective reality is dependent on us at all. Far from it. Our perception of reality, being composite, is one in which is necessarily based on rational thought, and internal processes. These processes formulate the basis of what we can know about reality.

Reality, being both distinct from, and intimate with the subjective, is of a nature that is physical, and unique to our perception of things. By this I mean that reality, as we can define it, is processed within our brains. Because of this, we could be incorrect about the true nature of the outside world to the degree that we are not able to know the truth about what it actually is. Our ability to grasp this concept is shaky at best, and that is because we often tend to believe that what we experience with our senses is the true representation of the object(s) before us. It could be that we are all forced to view reality similarly to one another simply because we all share the same senses.

Reality is complex because there are three distinct concepts that we are discussing here. These concepts are the following: shared objective

reality, subjectively processed reality, and composite reality which combines the objective, and subjective together. Shared objective reality represents what the senses can tell us about the world around us. Subjectively processed realities are based on the individual rather than the whole in terms of how we take in the information before us. Composite reality takes the form of individual with universal experience.

When I say universal experience, I am referring to what everyone can possibly know about facts, figures, and other concrete truths as they are represented in the outside world. Distinctions must be made, and understood, about the tenuous grasp we have on reality, versus what it truly represents for us as human beings. This is a complex subject to tackle, but it is one in which it is necessary for us to explore further the subtleties of reality.

We perceive reality, but we only know the calculations, and physics of what it consists of. Perhaps we are missing something in the bigger picture. This is something that we may have to come to terms with; that we are destined to see myopically regarding reality. There are so many blind spots in our perceptual world that we can only imagine what the fullness of reality represents for us, and beyond that, for the cosmos at large. I do not intend to go into the metaphysical, for the concerns that I have here relate strictly to the dichotomous forces extant in objectivity, and subjectivity.

These dichotomous forces color our perception, and allow us to cognitively process several dimensions of reality at once. The causal, and the acausal represent the physical essence of being, and that of non-being. Similarly, the objective represents reality as we perceive it ecumenically, whilst the subjective is a filtered form of reality unique to ourselves. These are the distinctions that I am saying are important to make regarding any theorization about objective reality. Consciousness plays a role in our unique take on what discovered truths about the world represent. Our ability to perceive in general allows for these discoveries to be made.

Perception is flawed at best, and must be viewed suspiciously by the individual because of how it represents the world around us. By this, I mean that what we think we know about the world is skewed by the limitations of our senses. We all know cognitively that there are foundational truths which can be understood by the senses. This much is certain. Yet, at the same time our subjective way of learning about the world conceals much from our eyes about the whole truth. It is possible that someday we may learn additional facets of the truth regarding reality, but how we are going to get there is a question for another time.

In the world of the senses, we are like partially blind creatures that only perceive a modicum of the truth behind knowable reality. When we look at all that we have been able to decipher regarding the sciences, historical facts, and other forms of knowledge, we see a picture that simultaneously makes sense, and also does not. What I am trying to get at here is that there is a tremendous handicap that exists in our current methods of perceiving the world based on our limited biological natures.

Let us consider for a moment whether there may be a way to unlock the mysteries surrounding currently unknown realities. If this is possible, we would have to augment our senses to a degree that human biological forces alone have not provided for us. There would have to be some form of engineering, medical advancements, and technological theories which then give us the ability to perceive more of reality before us. If this were possible, we then may find ourselves in a situation where we must adapt to additional paradigms of truth.

It is through the contemplation of reality that we now find ourselves begging the question of whether we can know more about what makes the world the way it is. Perhaps we are not meant to know the absolute truth regarding the world around us. If we did, it is possible that we would not be able to handle the fullness of reality before us. One theory is that it could be possible that our senses have evolved the way they did so that our brains would be able to handle a construct of reality that may only be partially visible.

Objectively, we are in a world where the laws of physics apply, and we are locked inside of our bodies in a sense that we can only obey the rules of nature. Our imaginations invoke in us all sorts of ideas, thoughts, and theoretical possibilities but we do not know the extent to which our imaginations are true or false. This is one of the greatest conundrums of all of human history in that we cannot always perceive fact from fiction. It is likely that throughout the course of several lifetimes there will be only a certain modicum of progress relating to the expansion of our perceptions.

We are trapped in our bodies whilst we live, and at the same time we depend on our biological nature to provide for us a form of consciousness that is tangible (at least to a certain extent.) This is a description of just how imprisoned we truly are in our state of sentience. None of us can escape biological reality, and know if consciousness continues to somehow function. Death, being an enigma, keeps us on our toes in the sense that we continuously seek to augment our realities in the limited time we have here on this Earth.

The world will continue to exist without us, and this basic knowledge is enough to humble us in our heart of hearts. As civilizations come, and go, the sands of time continue to flow through the vastness of space. These thoughts are simply those that resonate with the rest of humanity because in the depths of our being we are cognizant of these things. None of us will escape death. Still, we struggle to make sense of the world around us whilst we live, and this is evident through our continual striving towards scientific discovery.

Science has brought us quite far in the knowledge of what I call base reality. Base reality, in this context, is what we all know to be true through the experience of our senses. We make hypotheses, question our theories, and decide whether something is true based on repetition, and replicability. All these things come together to form the basis of what we know about the world, and the objective nature of everything that surrounds us. We are continuously searching for more evidence about what reality consists of.

We cannot hold onto the hopes of distant scientific breakthroughs because we will not live to see them. We can only latch onto those theories, and proven facts which are based on our current knowledge. At the same time, it is important to strive for more knowledge because we are insatiable creatures. Our thirst for understanding conceptual ideas, and ideals, is evident enough through our observations about ourselves and others.

Isolation can bring an individual to a very introspective outlook on life, and this is because it can teach us about getting in touch with our own ability to rationalize. When we think about the concept of analysis, we think of the scrutiny of intellectual abilities to the point where there is no room for error. The realm of the senses, which we are beholden to, keeps us focused on that which can be known as the truth. All truth is but a representation of the real thing, which can only be partially known through our discoveries via the senses.

My theory is that we will eventually know virtually all that can be known about ideas through the senses, and once we reach that limitation, we will seek further ways to augment our understanding of reality. Through advancements in technology, it may someday be possible to increase our abilities to hear, to see, and to feel objectively real concepts in an enhanced cognitive manner. These enhancements would be hardware, and software based, and allow users to perceive further descriptive elements of known reality.

The corpse of the human body encapsulates all that we know about life. It is still, without sentience or feeling, and is representative of a shell of what once was. It can be said that the human body is also a representation of the universe at large because we are also physical matter. What sets us apart from a rock (on a very crude level) is our ability to rationalize things cognitively as individuals. Our individuality is dependent on our biological makeup, as well as the environment around us. Taking these things into consideration, it must also be pointed out that we will eventually be as still as the rock is in our time of becoming deceased.

Abstractions are a feature of human consciousness, and this is shown through the way that we formulate ideas. After we formulate some ideas, we attempt to validate them as if it were possible to be experienced objectively. Other ideas fall to the wayside as mere daydreams invoked by an overactive imagination. Yet, it seems as if all the ideas we come up with have some basis in reality when dissected profoundly on an intellectual level. These ideas are not necessarily based on reality in the way that we might conventionally see it, but it is through the symbolism presented in these thoughts which reflect some modicum of truth.

The truth, if it is to be known, must be objective. It must also be processed by our brains in a way that is organized, and makes sense to us foundationally. Without this concept, we would never be able to grasp the complexities of life as we do now. What I mean by this is that our foundations are based on logic, and reason; both of which are necessary for cognition to be fruitful. We must use our faculties to research matters surrounding our cognitive faculties, and the underlying biological factors which are responsible for them.

By understanding biology better, we can then take this knowledge, and utilize it in a way that is beneficial to our research of the psychology of mind. There is so much for us to learn about how consciousness interacts with the brain that we can hardly run out of theories in the meantime regarding it. Consciousness physically manifests itself through neuronal impulses, and other activities in the brain.

We can gather data from research regarding how the brain functions, and why it does what it does on a physical level. These things are all known. What is unknown to us is where it fits into our worldview when we consider that we do not know everything there is to know about consciousness. If we knew everything about it, we would be able to easily refute other theories regarding the exact nature it takes in our physical world. Is consciousness physical somehow? Is there a way for us to be certain that we do not experience awareness after our demise? These are important questions to be asked.

The brain, being the center of where we learn, understand, and communicate with one another, allows us to formulate a composite reality. This composite reality is shared with the entirety of humanity via the senses, and this is something which is evident through reason. As we focus on emptying our understanding of the subjective through educating ourselves on the objective truths, we still find ourselves cast ashore alone. We attempt to grasp onto portions of reality which we do not have access to either because of evolutionary qualities, or through the realm of the senses. Cognitively, it seems as if we are just at the edge of some incredible discovery regarding the underlying concepts of conscious awareness, but we do not know what that might consist of.

Perhaps we are destined to never find out for ourselves if it is possible to augment the senses using technology in order to better understand reality. What we are left with consists of a limited consciousness that can only know so much about what this enormous universe truly represents. We can construct the world around us through a focus on scientific facts, as well as our own independent senses. This is something that we always do in order to make sense of the world.

When we strip theory down to its bare core, we can see that we are left with a representation of the world that is tremendously difficult to dissect without seeing things myopically. It is possible that our destination in this life is to not be able to see reality in any true form besides what our senses allow us to see. If this is the case, then we will always be in the dark regarding awareness, and the lengths that our natural abilities can go to report to us on our surroundings.

If we are left in the dark regarding the world around us, there is still some hope found in scientific inquiry. This information may not easily be present for us to experience firsthand, but someday others may build upon our discoveries. It is possible that our only legacy here on this planet is to continue on the path of knowledge that we do have in order to give future generations an understanding of the cosmos that we are merely touching upon ourselves.

We are at the beginning of a great journey into the truth of what reality consists of. Everything we have learned thus far has allowed us to continue on the path toward scientific, and philosophical inquiry. It is true, as I have mentioned, that we may never have all the answers, but it is possible that we can have a portion of the truth. The senses could be conduits between reality, and the filtered portions of our subjective minds which process the outside world. If this is so, then it is also possible that we might just only be able to evolutionarily understand reality by a narrow margin.

This narrow margin is what I call fundamental reality. Fundamental reality consists of the base knowledge that we have regarding the outside world, and how it functions. This expression of reality is based on the interaction between the senses, and the world as we know it. We are knowledgeable as to the conditions that exist in the outside world in relation to how functionality exists for us as human beings. This functionality is buffered by the senses, and could represent only a thin subsection of what might be a broader truth.

If we open our minds to the possibility that there could very well be portions of reality not accessible to us, then it also follows that there could be additional rules, forces, and conditions that govern the world. We, of course, would be ignorant of those rules, forces, and conditions, and this is because of the narrow scope of what we can perceive in our physical bodies. The mind is a powerful tool whereby we can imagine the fetters of our shackles loosened so that we can push away boundaries set upon us by life. I say imagine because that is the extent of what we can do outside of a very limited ability to influence the outside world with our acts.

It is possible that we imagine complex mythologies in order to account for those blind spots that exist in human comprehension. What I mean by this is that our theologizing on hypotheticals keeps us able to rationalize on a primitive level the aspects of reality which are outside of our grasp. If we look at the mythological from a sociological perspective, we are then able to dissect the possibilities regarding conscious awareness.

Let us explore further the influences that mythology, religion, and other ancient systems of thought have on the human mind. Mythology is universal in the sense that, while there may be differing stories, names, places, and events described by it, the outcome is virtually the same throughout the world. We are subjected to the stories that have manifested in times past which have a profound impact on who we are, even if we look at the world from a logical, rational point of view. Religious views, whilst they vary tremendously from culture to culture, explore a theme of a world that is under the influence of a much greater force (whatever that might be.)

Before the theories of Rudolf Virchow in the 19th century, it was often colloquially believed that ill humors were the primary cause of diseases. Now we understand cellular processes that function based on health, and disease through pathological studies. This understanding has led us to look at the world around us on a cellular level, and has advanced the theories, and discoveries which now are taken for granted as being true. Still, we must also realize that these advancements are natural for human beings to discover, and this is because throughout history we have slowly replaced our dependence on the fantastical with the scientifically evident.

The profundity of mythos cannot be understated even in the wake of our post-modern scientific age. We are at the cusp of something deeper than all of us when it comes to discovering new concepts, and possible realities. Perhaps we have created these fantastical myths to help us cope with those portions of reality that we do not have direct access to. Our subjective minds can drum up such creativity that our consciousness seems to be based on the very human attempt to surpass our knowledge of truth through mythos.

Even if we suppose that mythology holds no value, we would be mistaken because there are clues hidden within this aspect of human culture that can be deciphered through an objective lens. We have the ability to see through symbolism, and define for ourselves what it means to be truly cognizant of reality.

Symbolism provides an outlet for us to dissect, distinguish, and process the realities of the world around us in a distinct way. This distinction is based on the uniqueness of the human mind, and how it functions in everyday life. The brain is a complex, yet anatomically understood organ, in that it provides us with a way to navigate our way through this world. As we find ourselves learning more about the world in our daily lives, we become cognizant more and more of the fact that we are missing huge swaths of information. These swaths of information are connected with portions of reality that we simply have no access to.

It is natural to be fearful of the unknown, especially since that is a feature of human consciousness which is well documented. What lies beyond cognition is a world of richness, and complexity that can only be imagined. As we cannot determine what is beyond our senses without some form of theoretical augmentation, we must rely on what has been discovered about the physical world through science.

Science is continuously progressing in such a manner that we are indeed expanding what we know about the physical universe. Still, we are unable to experience the fullness of this knowledge because of our very real limitations biologically. If we could find some way to alter our consciousness, then we could possibly decipher more aspects of reality than we currently have access to. The question is, do we really want to know what lies beyond our current understanding? It may not be all that unwise to think about this question at length, especially since there may be vistas of reality that are possibly terrifying to behold.

I am bringing this subject up because there might be some evolutionary reason why we do not know more than we are capable of knowing about the universe. Our physical nature might be one in which we are imprisoned by our limitations, or kept from knowing about all of reality due to the possibility that we might collapse mentally if we were to know more. This is a distinct possibility, but it may be one in which we just find ourselves in as a result of chance, or perhaps the right conditions for this sort of evolution to proceed.

Chapter Five

Social Connections, and Objectivity.

The way that we move throughout society in our casual daily existence is determined by one's own station in life. Social upbringing, current environmental factors, as well as cognitive abilities all come together to influence the individual in their overall personality. Actions are brought out into the world through thoughts, ideas, and passing fancies which may or may not be ethically sound. There are several dimensions of reality that we face here, and this is evidenced by each of our senses working together. Information is relayed to the brain via the senses, and it is there where we are able to make sense of the world.

It is as if we are in a gigantic puzzle with various pieces strewn about here, and there. As human beings, we search for those pieces, and place them where we can fit them in the great tapestry of known reality. Objective reality is always there, and will continue to exert its power over us throughout the entirety of one's lifespan. How we process this objective information is highly individualistic in nature, and this is where our ability to function on a social level is important. To clarify, I mean that how we interact with others directly influences our behavior in ways that are not always immediately known.

When we observe others, and their behaviors, we take social cues which are then processed by the brain in a way that makes sense to us. By looking at how others respond to situations, we can then formulate actions in our minds in a more concrete way. We conceptualize information, as well as educate ourselves as to how we should respond to outside stimuli. All this is done within the quietude of the mind, and just like subjectivity, it is a manifestation of individuality within conscious awareness.

This individuality is potent in that it is the source of foundational knowledge of the construct of the self that is perceiving this reality. The

self is merely *us* codified into a conventional packaging whereby we can explore the outside world in a personalized manner. Whether we decide to break it down to this level is up to us, but in my view, it is a necessity as the deconstruction of the self is pivotal in the evolution of understanding. The more that we know about ourselves, and what is unreal about us, the more we can penetrate the heart of ignorance to gather what little knowledge we can.

It is in those spaces of abstract thought that we find ourselves situated entirely within our own accord. To clarify, we are peculiar creatures in that we seek to know reality, yet at the same time we design for ourselves with our imaginations constructs which are hardly real. If we are to dissect the truth, we must then be willing to cast aside those things which are not authentically us. This is no easy task, of course, and must be prefaced with the admission that our individuality hinges upon these constructs in many ways.

Yet, when we look at the bigger picture, it becomes easier to see just how insignificant our roles truly are in the world. We often think that what we know about the cosmos is sufficient for our understanding. When we peel back the layers of socialization, and personal history, the individual then becomes cognizant of the fact that we know extraordinarily little about the universe around us. Our senses keep us imprisoned in our small world of personality, and prevent us from reaching out beyond the insignificance of our weak disposition toward life. Perhaps this is another example of the tragedy of existence, particularly human existence.

We must be willing to lay down our current life for one in which there is a degree of authenticity if we are to embolden ourselves to peer objectively into the outside world. There is no self, nor is there a human-centric aspect of existence that can keep us from realizing this. We only have a blank slate whereby we must continue to toil, and work hard at looking at the possibilities before us.

The unity of reality is only apparent through our recognition of what might be, and this is wholly based on our senses. Physicality, the subjective, the objective, and the mental are all dimensions of our constructed reality. We relate to one another because of this, and it is clear that we view the world around us similarly to one another. Because of this, we can agree upon such findings in science such as mass, weight, volume, and so on. What we cannot agree upon are the *subtleties* that lie within reality which we are unable to fully comprehend.

Cognition brings us to a level of understanding that is based upon how we process information in our brains. This understanding is necessarily connected with the limitations of our perception of the world around us. We can only assume that there are vistas of reality that are undiscovered beyond the realm of sensorial experience. If this is the case, then it is possible (as I have said) that it is a good thing that we do not venture too far beyond what we can currently know. What I mean by this is that the truth of reality might be far too busy for us to truly comprehend.

In the unexplored portions of reality there may be so many discoveries, nuances, and physical properties that we might not be able to dissect properly all this added information. Our biology could be saving us from utter insanity through the limitations that are naturally placed upon us through the senses. There could be a form of reality surrounding us that is invisible, and unknown to us due to our limitations. We could be seeing only a reflection, as it were, of the entirety of the spheres that comprise reality.

There is something disjointed about human experiences, and this is shown through the various ways we try to make sense of the world but cannot. There are man-made sociological constructs that are placed in our direct line of view at all times. These sociological constructs keep us psychologically aware of our own personal need to have structure, and organization as the basis of our interactions with the world. It is within this artificially devised structure that we live, and breathe. Our relationship to reality is tenuous at best, and hopelessly flawed at worst.

Regardless of how flawed our relationship to reality is, there is a degree of sense that can be made of the world through our natural faculties. It is through these natural faculties that we learn about the world around us, and our place in the cosmos on at least a rudimentary level. Though we cannot seem to be able to rely on our senses alone to tell us the full story of reality, we can at least function on a vital level. This level of being allows us to push forward, and continue on the path of knowledge. There will always be some form of blind spot in our path to understanding reality. We must simply accept this, and move on.

The more we try to understand the world around us, the more there are theories regarding the complexities behind cognition that are brought up. These theories range from the fantastical to the rational, and everything in between. Psychology allows us to peer into the inner workings of the mind to a degree, and is based on scientific discovery, and knowledge regarding the brain. This allows us to look at functionality, patterns of thought processes, and to dissect the subtleties of conscious awareness to a point.

Still, we cannot at this point in time decipher reality to the degree that is beyond our known senses. We are stuck in a peculiar mathematical, and physical framework that, while allowing us to learn more about the world around us, keeps us from venturing too far beyond the scope of what we have already learned about the cosmos. We may have advancements over time, which is without a question, however, these advancements are purely based on our senses. This is the case, of course, with how we currently are able to perceive the world around us. Someday, as I have mentioned, we may be able to augment the senses in a manner that allows perception to increase exponentially.

None of us can travel far beyond the scope of what we already have knowledge of, save for that body of information which we have inherited through the sciences. It is through the physical sciences that we are able to ascertain the visible, knowable cosmos. All knowledge begins with a basic understanding of the human body, and the workings of the mind.

There are patterns to how we develop as human beings throughout our natural lifespans. These patterns are sociological, psychological, and internalized in such a way that they are at once unique to the individual, as well as universal in appearance. One pattern is to develop mental constructs that help to assuage the difficulties of living in this world. We create personas which we show to the outside world, and private ones which we keep to ourselves. It is as if we are in a large play, and we represent the various characters in some once unknown story. These characters that represent us are mental patterns which develop over time as a defense mechanism against the chaotic nature of the outside world.

Defense mechanisms keep us focused on maintaining a guard around us on a psychological level. This guard that we possess is artificial, and wholly subject to the history of the individual. Such things keep us relatively safe, in our minds, against attacks upon our character, person, and perception of the self. The self, as is known to the individual, encapsulates the entirety of the body of knowledge we have gained throughout our lives thus far. It is through the self that we can obtain a basic foundation for living that keeps us relatively unharmed from the barrage of information assailing us at all times.

Information, interaction, and influences from the outside world creep into our psyche on a level which is sublimated into the subjective mind. These three aspects of the causal form a unique bond which is inherently a part of the fabric of reality. Information keeps us aware of our surroundings, and tells us what we should know regarding the nature of the outside world. Interaction with others, and with objects in the causal universe tethers us to the objective via an ecumenical experience of focused exchange between individuals. Finally, we have influences from the outside world. It is here that the knowledge of the truth is found, and discovered by the individual to a degree which allows for there to be a balance between the mind, and the objective. All these aspects are regarded as being necessary for the individual to progress intellectually, as well as interpersonally with others.

In *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences*, authors Otto Rank, and Hanns Sachs claim that "As psychoanalysis learns to consider the ideational life, in general, as interplay of the instinctive life so the individual mental mechanisms of distortion and compromise formation correspond to the different possibilities of the fate of instinct; among these possible results, we recognize besides the repression, still others, especially transformation of instincts (such as the inversion into the opposite.)" It is at this point that we learn that through the primitivism of instinct the individual is able to either experience a transformation, or to repress one's own nature. In psychology, it is clear that what we represent as individuals begins with the primitive state of instinctual relationships, and how we choose to either reinvent ourselves, or remain stagnant.

All these influences, which range from the constructs of personality to the instinctual, come together to provide, and inform us as to how we should live. Certainly, we are influenced by the artifices of cultural phenomena such as religious, or dogmatic beliefs, but these are becoming increasingly untenable for many as we evolve into post-modernity. We are coming to realize that the source of our ability to function comes from a much more mysterious place than that of mythology alone. It is almost impossible to grasp the subtleties of mythology, but these ancient concepts haunt us even as we focus on the logical, and rational.

Our intention to gain knowledge of the world around us is neither precise, nor perfect, as it must be understood through the basic tools that we have intellectually. Cognitive experiences function on a level of basic biology, but at the same time we must recognize the abstract in consciousness. It is through the abstract that individuals are able to make sense of the world, and to navigate those spaces of uncertainty which plague us from the time we are born. Of course, we must understand the objective, of this there is no doubt. Yet, we are still in a position whereby we must also rely on our subjective method of processing objectivity as we habitually do. Our subjective method is unique to every individual, but is no doubt universal in its application.

This universality of application is based on the fact that we process information subjectively, and with our individual selves in mind. Each person has a unique vision of the world on a social level that fits into a narrative that has been created by the individual themselves. As a narrative, the subjective takes the objectivity available in the outside world, and imbues it with a sense of individuality that is unique to each, and every one of us. The sense of individuality that I am speaking of relates to how the individual creates constructs out of the available information that they come across. Outside input through the objective world forces us to manifest a way of thinking that is wholly based on a subjective worldview.

Of course, we could also look at the reality that we are facing, and deny that we view things subjectively, but that would be a case of self-deception. We often deceive ourselves, in that we think that we are objectively experiencing the world, when in fact we are experiencing a composite truth. This composite truth is based on the conceptualization that human beings can only sense, and know, a certain portion of reality. This reality is therefore a composite as well, and consists of various machinations of the mind that interpret the outside world, however poorly.

By this, I mean that objective mathematical truths, as well as physics-based truths, are experienced in a way that is peculiar to our sensorial experience. Our focus on that which can be replicated, known through others, and experienced individually, helps to maintain our grip on the causal world. As far as we know, these laws, or truths, are dimensionally available to us on a fundamental level, but we do not know whether or not there are additional dimensions to our discovery of physics, and calculation.

Human beings are easily deceived, especially when it comes to an understanding of what is, and is not fundamental to consciousness. We have our theories, and each one of them provides some clue as to the fullness of the truth regarding objectivity. It would be a stretch to say that we know everything there is to know about the objective causal world. Still, we press on, and continue to search for answers to our critical questions.

Our questions regarding life are based on causality, being, and essence. Causality is in reference to the objective physical nature of the world. Being represents the individual, and the various aspects of personality. Essence here represents what it means to be fundamentally human. Humanity is, as I have mentioned many times before, at a crossroads of experience, and this is due to the world rapidly changing in our post-modern society. The post-modern is all around us, and grasps onto our totality of being through the essence of despair. It is through despair that we learn of the grave situation we find ourselves in as a species.

Despair represents a powerful aspect of the human mind, and is one in which there is rarely a cure present, and available. It is a fundamental human emotion that comprises of all those aspects of existence which torture us. The more we seek out knowledge, the deeper we become involved in the understanding of our own deaths. This is objective knowledge at work. In the recesses of the mind there lies a profound understanding of mortality, and this is even more pronounced for those who have studied anatomical structures.

The causal is that which confronts us on a daily basis, and is objectively real in the sense that others can confirm it. Of course, what we all agree upon to be real could simply be a mere fraction of the reality that is not available to us. It is also possible that everything that we know is either a simulation, or an elaborate matrix of reality that we can hardly begin to comprehend. These possibilities are neither falsified nor are they codified as being true either.

The fact that we are faced with multiple possibilities is one of the greatest tragedies that we will ever know. It seems at times that we will never know, no matter how hard we might try to be aware, regarding an expanded comprehension of the universe that is inclusive of all aspects of reality. Our ability to function on a level that is grounded in reason, and logic, allows us to question our reality in a cohesive manner. By this, I mean that each of us has theories, ideas, and conceptualizations.

To conceive of reality is to be open to changing perspectives regarding the truth, and what we can know. This sort of concept requires individuals to be open psychologically to the possibility that what we know to be true is at least partially false. It is humbling to think of the myriad of ways we as a species have been wrong about the cosmology of the world, and the universe at large. Throughout written history, human beings have attempted to bridge the gap between the knowable, and that which is unknown. Of course, it is an impossible task, but we continuously seek answers to our burning questions regardless of the outcome.

Society is still developing in the sense that we are only beginning to touch the surface regarding a more profound sort of education that is starting to be implemented. This education is in the sciences, as well as in technology. Knowledge of both of these disciplines can serve as a gateway whereby the individual can perceive deeper truths concerning reality as a whole. The individual is at the center of this education. Such aspects of learning are quickly becoming more available as globalization continues to take effect.

It is through globalization that we can universally have access to information. Much of this is thanks to technological advancements which allow us to have instantaneous access to data regardless of location. The social aspect of the human experience is developing rapidly toward the implementation of artificial intelligence, and a reliance on technology. This will no doubt continue to be a major influence on our understanding of the world as individuals, and as entire cultures. The truth of the matter is that we will continue to develop technologically along a trajectory that may lead to augmentation of biological matter.

If there is a development in technology that allows for augmentation, then we may find ourselves looking at the possibility of understanding more of reality than we currently have access to. These developments could have massive implications for the future of the human species. Objective reality may then be seen as being more encompassing of aspects that we had not originally observed.

Scrutiny keeps us on the cusp of new knowledge regarding the natural sciences. We have a tremendous body of knowledge specifically dealing with the brain, and the various functions it has from an anatomical, and measured viewpoint. This body of knowledge is based on precedent, past discoveries, and observations. With this knowledge we still do not have an adequate explanation for consciousness. We will see whether our adoption of technology will extend to enhancing the senses we have access to, or not.

The world maintains an order in which we are active participants in the scope of what constitutes as being real. The truth, if we are to break it down, is that we envision a foundation of reality where everything makes sense. The problem with this view is that we cannot currently make sense of the universe in such a way that we will have a complete cosmological foundation of everything that exists. We may never have such a foundation available to us because we are limited in our perception of fundamental reality.

An invisible world exists alongside us at every moment of the day, though we cannot perceive it. Objectively, we can experience what others report as the truth, but we cannot know beyond what the senses allow us to experience. This is, of course, if we follow the natural path of human biological fact. If we entertain the possibilities that we might be able to change our natural capacities into something which is unnaturally augmented, then there may be a way to know things beyond the current scope of our abilities. At this point in time, we do not know what that would look like, nor can we envision it beyond the scope of our imagination.

The imagination is a powerful force in the human repertoire of abilities. We can cognitively envision the possibilities which exist outside of causal reality on a level which is beyond simple limitation. What I mean here is that it is in our minds where we possess a sort of power that is beyond objectivity. It is of a subjective nature that is fueled by symbolism, and the unconscious.

Chapter Six

The Classifications of States of Consciousness.

"It is perhaps well to reemphasize that there are no absolute lines of demarcation between any of the functional psychoses. Abnormal variations of behavior which are due to affective distortion are to be regarded as varieties of biological abortion. The predominant affective variations and symptomatic traits that characterize the different types are due to the conditional needs of the autonomic cravings and egoistic, affective resistances to these needs." – Edward J. Kempf, *Psychopathology*.

Human beings are caught between the pathologies of abnormal thinking, and the rational focus on conscious awareness. It is through our awareness that we are thereby privy to realize what constitutes rationality, versus the pathological. By looking at the world in a way that forces us to realize the potentiality we have for the abnormal, we can come to an understanding of our consciousness on a sober level. This sobriety is a form of meditation because it forces us to look introspectively regarding human cognition.

Edward J. Kempf, in his work *Psychopathology*, clearly lines out the difference between the well-adjusted, and the abnormal. It is here that individuals are classified not so much by factors that must deal with the outside world, as they are by their inner-cognitive abilities. In the states of consciousness where mental illness arises, there are often several reasons why this might occur. We must explore honestly regarding the various states of consciousness, including those which are painful to conceive of. The reason behind this is that it is through the recognition of abnormality that we can perceive a grain of truth regarding reality itself. The abnormal exists because of environmental, social, and individual causes.

Each state of consciousness is based on some form of objective understanding of the world, even if that state functions on an abstract level.

What I mean by this is that no matter how well we cognitively function, we must consider that in any given state we have an opportunity to experience reality through an individualistic lens. This experience of reality is highly influenced by the subjective, symbolic, and personal aspects of consciousness.

It is through human experiences that we learn how to dissect the world around us proportionate to our state of mind. Our state of mind allows us to function on a wavelength whereby we can decipher the outside world in some concrete way. One way of deciphering the world is found through a form of rational, and logical thinking. It is here where we must discover, and educate ourselves regarding the causal objective reality before us.

Consciousness is enigmatic in that, while we do not fully understand it, the expression of it is fluid, and malleable in a way that allows us to understand the world better as it appears to us. We may never fully uncover the mysteries behind consciousness in our lifetimes, but we can still theorize regarding it. As we approach the topic of cognitive awareness, it is important to consider that each individual is able to perceive the world to the best of their abilities. There are so many factors that contribute to the expression of conscious awareness, and these involve sociological phenomena that is rich in tradition.

This tradition involves thinking abstractly, as well as rationally when looking at the world. As we turn inward on ourselves, we become increasingly introspective regarding our own natures, and those of others. The pathology of the mind is so complex that it is still being studied to this day. One way of looking at things is to conclude that all of us have some pathological experience in our minds at one point or another. If we take this view into consideration, we then are able to realize that it is in illness that we learn of the value of the objective truth. When we are stripped naked, metaphorically, we see things so much clearer than before.

The world around us is complex, dichotomous, and full of uncertainty on an emotional, and intellectual level. The complexity of the world is found in the different strata of realities that come together to form a composite understanding of the truth. In our struggle to understand our place in the world, we are continuously challenged to make sense of our surroundings. The world is dichotomous in the sense that there are opposing factors which comprise the rich inner life of the individual in contrast to the purely objective. We exist in this life of uncertainty in such a way that we do not realize, or are often ignorant of, the need to realize our fragility.

Each of these factors come together to synthesize our world before us. We are simultaneously complex, yet primitive in many ways. Our understanding of the outside world is colored primarily by those features of consciousness which exist for us. We are carnal creatures, and live in a world of senses allowing us to envision with mathematical certainty the foundational basis for reality. Physics exists, and is independent of our willingness to recognize it. Mathematics allows us to become cognizant of the aspects of reality which are dimensionally available to us as human beings.

States of consciousness vary from person to person, but there are fundamental similarities which allow for a dispensation of the truth. The truth here is that we are at the mercy of a physical universe that acts upon us, and our biology, in such a way that we cannot ignore it. Our inner world is colored by the subjective, but at the same time we are engulfed by objective reality on a fundamental level. It is here that the individual can come to realize that everything is a composite of dichotomous forces.

Just as night follows the day, the subjective follows the objective. All things are dichotomous in some fashion, or another. Composite reality is simply our window to reality (even if that window is narrow in a metaphorical sense.) All that we know is what our senses report to us, and this goes for all known natural laws that can be observed with scrutiny. The individual can only know a theoretically narrow margin of what reality is.

The status of the conscious mind changes over time, and even throughout the daily experience of life. It is hard to pinpoint these changes because they are developed subtly within the brain of the individual in question. We can measure brain waves, and determine that something is going on inside of us on a scientific level, and this is all well and good. Yet, we face a great mystery when it comes to consciousness in general. The conscious mind is malleable in the sense that it can adapt to environmental stimuli, as well as internal processing of subjective experiences.

These subjective experiences interact with the objective in the sense that there is an interplay between the two on a fundamental level. This interplay brings the aspects of what everyone else experiences versus what the individual recognizes through cognitive awareness. It is through the subjective processing of information that we realize just how varied the forms of consciousness truly are. Each one of us is truly unique in the sense that no two inner worlds are quite the same. Certainly, we experience objective realities in the same manner as one another, yet there is something else going on in the brain at the same time which is wholly unique.

What that something else *is* exactly is quite difficult to pinpoint. My theory is that reality is processed almost as if we were looking into a mirror that has been shattered. We see certain shards of the mirror reflecting back onto us our image, yet in each shard there is a different angle that is seen. Similarly, there are varying sizes of these broken shards which, when separated, appear chaotic rather than organized. Our reality, in this theory, is completely shattered, separated by various aspects, and pieced together (as best as possible) through rational thought.

Our senses, and capacity to reflect on the world, are combined in our cognitive abilities. It is through the cognition of the brain that we are able to piece together those shards of this metaphorical mirror, and build a picture of reality which is a composite of each aspect. This picture may never be complete, but it appears to us to be so despite our limitations. To clarify, we only have partial access to reality, even if it seems otherwise.

To classify states of consciousness we must scrutinize ourselves on a level that is introspective, and rational. We must pierce through the veil of self-deception, and be completely honest with ourselves as individuals. Doing this is no easy task, but it is one in which there is a high degree of introspection involved. Each one of us has the capability to decipher the states of mind involved in understanding objective reality versus the subjective.

The unconscious mind is powerful in that there is an induction of variables such as external environmental factors, internal states of emotional expression, and the symbolic all at once. The symbolic allows us to fill in the gaps between what we can understand, and what we do not currently know to be the truth. Emotional expression, being a manifestation of internalized states, provides an outlet whereby the individual can make sense of the outside world.

External environmental aspects include the experiences we all go through, inclusive of loss, suffering (either mental, or physical), and even moments of pleasure. These are factors that are profoundly influential in our lives because of the depth of experience required to understand what it means to quantify grief with the reality of fleeting pleasures. Grief is a factor which involves every ounce of strength from the individual to pass through. It is remembered in a manner that is personal to the individual, and at the same time it is a concrete reality for each one of us in some way.

Sorrow, pain, anguish, and uncertainty plague us nearly all the days of our lives in some way (however minute) because it is ever present to a varying degree. Yes, there are times when we experience pleasure, or at the very least boredom induced through the lack of active suffering. It is certain, however, that we experience difficult emotions more often than not. Whilst we live, we must push forward in order to survive each passing day. This much is known. We do not know many factors regarding the extension of reality that are beyond our scope of reasoning, and cognitive understanding. Still, we must carry on, and think of ways to reconcile the suffering, and pain we go through versus the absence of these things.

The absence of pain does not make it any less difficult to experience it when it does come to us by virtue of situational forces. It is through pain that we can gauge our lives in such a way as to measure abstractly this aspect of being contrasted with our existence as a whole. Suffering keeps us aware of the objective world in such a way that it reminds us continuously of its presence in our lives. Whether this suffering consists of the physical, or mental, it is always present in some way for us.

It is through suffering that we are able to penetrate into the heart of humanity. In our greatest time of need we often are able to peer deeply into our minds, and become witnesses to the phenomena of despair. This phenomenon is uncontrollable, and can only be allayed for a time during one's own life. It always comes back to haunt everyone. Despair, being the source of even greater maladies such as the will towards self-annihilation, is an aspect of human emotion that is the result of a consciousness that is perhaps too advanced.

This advanced consciousness is what we are currently facing, and will always face as a species. We have always been enthralled by the questions that life brings, regardless of how reckless the outcome of the knowledge of our inquiries might be. By this, I mean that there will come a time in which we will be face to face with the ability to learn something about time, space, or physics in general which is beyond our current understanding. Once we learn about whatever discoveries are made, it is possible that we are then culpable of the resulting knowledge which may drive us mad.

Let us consider for a moment that the knowledge of what lies beyond our current sensual abilities is perhaps too terrifying to behold. I do not mean mathematical equations causing panic in the streets. What I am referring to is the possibility that we might augment our senses in such a way as to understand new aspects of hitherto unknown vistas of reality. This knowledge might cause us to become more aware of the world as it really is, and therefore we could lose our faculties of reasoning if we venture too far. This theory is, of course, remote in the sense that we currently do not have access to such augmentation at the moment.

Nonetheless, it is a very real proposition that we could, at some point in our evolution, go mad from our discoveries about the nature of reality. We are already cognizant of death, and how it occurs on a scientific level. In addition, we are aware of the fragility of life as it exists for us on a daily basis, even if we do not actively acknowledge it. These factors combine to display a certain pathology of thinking which has developed throughout our history as a species. This pathology is that of the aforementioned aspect of despair which is so peculiar to us as human beings.

Despair, being a mental concept, is one which we all must experience at one point or another in time. It is through the mental experience of being human that we must succumb to its grasp one day, much like death. When we experience despair, we plumb the very depths of our being, and emerge into the true core of what it means to be human. This core is fundamental to all that live in that we must admit a certain defeat regarding the course of life as it is. Whether this comes to us through intellectual idealism, or through instinctual means, we must all face despair as a very real element of our existence.

When we suffer, we often cannot think of anything else other than the pain that we are directly facing. This causes us to be single-minded in the sense that nothing else is adequate to distract one from experiencing that pain. Suffering is suitable enough for us to lose control of our faculties, and can be the cause of a great deal of internal anguish for the individual. All forms of suffering are detrimental to the individual in one way or another.

Death gives us a unique perspective on life because it is a constant reality for us to have to face. We may be in good health, have general positive experiences, and so on, but these things are ephemeral in nature. What I mean by this is that they pass all too quickly, and the pain or anguish returns just as swiftly to the individual in question. Paradoxically, we tend to ignore this fact, and continue on with our lives as if these issues are not possible to experience. Despite our best efforts, we cannot escape the ravages of time, and experience.

It is through experience that we learn of the various masks we place in front of our faces when dealing with others on a social level. The focus that can be seen here is that we take on various personas throughout our lives, and rarely do we take a look at the authenticity of them. When we do, we become introspective, and are able to see through the façade of the way we present ourselves. This façade is one which we all shall succumb to in our daily lives either out of necessity, or mere habit. Either way, we are continuously showing various masks to others that are constructed from multiple sources.

These sources are psychological, sociological, and ideological in nature. The psychological here is represented through the connection that is made between the subjective experience of the individual, and the objective world. In turn, the sociological characteristic is focused here on the way that we interact with others out of habit. Finally, the ideological aspect reveals the construct of the self that is fashioned out of necessity through the development of the mind itself.

Our minds are constructed in such a way that we ourselves represent in essence a conglomeration of influences. These influences are social, biological, and at times primitive in nature. We must therefore look deeply into our unconscious mind, and perceive those aspects of the primitive through introspection. Again, meditation on one's own nature is one way to look at the situation, and rationalize it. This is a normal thing to try to do because it is based on logic, and reason. It is only natural to want to dissect the truth in such a manner that we can make some sense of it.

There are several ways in which we can stimulate the mind to focus on the primitive desires inherent within. One way is through meditation. Another is through being honest with oneself, and realizing that there are aspects of our being which are carnal, and base in nature. These things are all found through introspection, and through the realization that we are complex beings with intricate truths that must be unveiled one by one. The truth here is represented by the nakedness of humankind in front of the reality of nature.

Nothing we can do can change the outcome of our existence which is death. All we can do is try to perceive the truth of this reality whilst we live, and perhaps leave an intellectual legacy to the people who come after us. In the depths of our very being we are in search of a truth which may never unfold before our eyes. This truth represents a cosmological view that is expanded through the distinguishing of fact from fiction. The more knowledge of the cosmos that we gain, the more we are able to look accurately at ourselves on biological, and psychological levels.

In death, we are the same as each other. Our bodies decay, and eventually skeletonize, and there is nothing we can do to prevent this from happening. It is through the process of decay that there is an understanding regarding biological aspects of the physical body. This knowledge can help assist the individual to the extent that there is an intimacy of understanding that develops through time. This intimacy is based on a fundamental knowledge of the human body, as well as those mental processes which are channeled through us daily.

When we are introspective, and focus on the subjective, we are able to communicate more effectively with ourselves, and others. By allowing oneself to look inward, and really think hard about those subjects relating to inner experience, there is a possibility that there can be a personal revelation of being. This revelation of being is highly individualistic, and based on a profound introspection that must precede it.

Otto Rank, and Hanns Sachs, in their work *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences*, proclaim that "The needs, on the one hand, of bringing the processes of nature nearer by incarnating them, and on the other hand, of solving the human emotional conflicts by projecting them out into nature, unite in the tendency to myth formation." We are connected to the primitive need for mythology in order to explain the unexplainable regarding the conscious mind. It is through mythos that we are capable of recognizing powerful imaginative traits within us that influence our personas on a fundamental level. The subjective mind is focused on that which is able to be processed individualistically.

When despair takes hold of us, and we are in the middle of some psychological crisis of sorts, it is well, and good that we had better be prepared already for what we will experience. If we are not prepared to go through the experience of despair, it will hit us like a ton of bricks out of nowhere. This is not to say that it will be any easier for the individual that is prepared to experience despair. It is just that the person that thinks about these subjects is more likely to survive the effects which despair has on us in general.

Pain is pain regardless of how it is experienced. The same goes for anguish, and suffering of all kinds. Mental anguish can be so excruciatingly painful that it is debilitating on a fundamental level. Physical suffering can bring about worse conditions within the body, especially if it is a long-suffering form of illness or pathological disease. Regardless of how we suffer, there are still the effects of the pain that we go through whether it be physical or mental in nature.

As a species we have created myths in order to better explain the depths of consciousness, but we always end up empty-handed in the end. Our primitive nature still exists, and is always there even when we are at our most rational. When we dream, we experience this primitive nature for ourselves in a way that does not always coincide with objective reality. When we go about our daily lives as normal, we also experience the primitive nature of our needs for fulfillment, and basic survival.

Let us return to the concept that the abnormal entrenches itself in our daily lives. It is through the conscious recognition that pathologies exist that the individual is able to break through, as it were, and become aware of the subtleties that manifest in the mind. Our conglomeration of influences which makes up our personality is always present regardless of how far in the background it may be for us mentally. When we stop to consider the possibility that conscious awareness of pathologies can help assist the individual in seeing things from a more rational perspective, we can also imagine that attempting to do so represents a desire for survival. This desire for survival becomes apparent in all of us as we live our lives.

Chapter Seven

How the Seemingly Abnormal Affects the Casual World.

The world around us is stunningly chaotic, yet ordered in such a way as to create the illusion of steadfastness when all there remains is for there to be continual change. We change throughout our lives on a biological level, and this is apparent through the aging process. It is through the recognition of the world that we realize soon enough that everything that lives is subject to this change. No one can escape it, and it is simply something that must be recognized, and understood for what it is.

Our patchwork frame of understanding the objective world is one in which we are able to function on a relatively stable level. This understanding is inclusive of the subjective, as well as the processed information that comes to us through the senses. We are a composite of objective influences which are presented to us, and imprinted on us to a level which is foundational to who we basically are.

The abnormal stands before us as representative of the power that the mind has over our conscious awareness. We may think that we are able to control our minds to a great extent, but the more we think about it, the more possible it becomes that we are simply at the mercy of consciousness. As it stands, we are aware of many things that affect us on a daily basis. These things are inclusive of the concept that we shall die one day, that we shall become ill, and suffer from some sort of disease most likely.

We have a basis for understanding rationality, and the logical, and this is found in the rich history of education, and literacy that allows for critical thinking. This basis for how we learn about the world around us is found in the rich traditions of personal, educational, and an objective grounding in what can be known about reality.

But reality, as a term, is not just a misnomer for the definition of a complete vision of the world around us. What it is composed of, in the

context of our bodies, is simply something that we experience as a matter of fact through our senses. We do not know the scope of reality beyond the senses, and though it might be possible to augment them, even then we will have missed important vistas of truth obscured by the dullness of our knowledge of things. In other words, the more we learn about reality, the more we must concede that we know very little concerning the truth of the matter.

We live in a world that is constructed in such a way that pieces of life fall into place when we look at it through the lens of human consciousness. Things make sense. Geometry is sound, and so is essential mathematics. All is well in the world, or so it would seem. Yet, there is a burning desire within each one of us to magnify, and express his or her will to the outside world. There is a rich inner space of existence that is simply beyond the objective alone. It is one in which human consciousness resides in some mysterious fashion.

This mystery is one that fills our imagination with possibilities, ideals, thoughts, and passing fancies. For it must be said that though we function at a level which is both objective, and subjective, we represent a composite of both that cannot be denied. It is within the depths of human consciousness that we are able to find clues which will help us attend to life's pressing matters concerning the will, and existence.

The way we think about life reflects directly on how we might choose to act in this world. Our actions, even minor ones, are the result of being conscious, and aware. We can choose to create, or we can become destructive. Both choices are the consequences of human cognition, and we have to be solemnly aware of this truth. The will, being itself far from free, and possibly even illusory, is manifested through desires which are borne by the individual at the very core of their being. We all have desires that must be attended to, or at the very least, thought of in more than a passing way. These desires form the basis of all advancements in this life.

Life cannot be seen without looking at, and closely examining the senses themselves. We see the world around us, and can determine at least to a reasonable degree what is true, and what is false. We are able to navigate this world by means of instinct, information, and by way of our education (either formal or informal). Internally, however, we must make an informed decision as to whether we will choose to ruminate on those things which have plagued us since birth, or not.

The reality of the matter is that we are complex beings that require impetus from without, as well as within. In our subjective view of the world, we are able to create a composite image of what is real versus the patently false. It is an imperfect way of handling things, but it is one in which we are molded consistently by.

The strength of the will, through the manifestation of desire, keeps us afloat in this world where freedom is costly, and position in life is decided largely by situational factors. It is through the will that we are able to determine what is important to us on a fundamental level. We can accomplish great things with the power of the will itself, though this also depends on situational factors, and the environment in which one is surrounded.

None of us can pass through this life without thinking at least to a small degree about the fleeting nature of our bodies. When we do think about this topic, we are immediately humbled in a way that pierces through our pride, ego, and anything else that artificially stands in front of us blocking us from the truth. The scales fall from our eyes at some point, and we are able to see anew. Still, even though this is something that occurs naturally in the course of an individual's life, this does not mean that the person in question will take seriously the revelations that have been granted to them. To clarify, though we may experience revelations of internal self-knowledge, this does not mean that we will become wise because of it. Human beings are broken on a fundamental level, and this becomes all the more apparent when observing these things which occur to all of us at some point in time.

Purpose can be found through the study of the abnormalities which plague us psychologically. We can choose to educate ourselves regarding the pathologies that we may encounter in ourselves, and those around us. This choice is one in which there is a focus on the power of the will to extend desire beyond the subjective experience of the mind into the actual world through action. It is through intellectualizing the morbid that we can find ourselves in a better position to gauge where we are mentally. This seems difficult to do, of course, but like anything that is done as a novice it is always difficult in the beginning.

The abnormal reaches us through the everyday interactions we have with others. It affects us even if we do not suffer from said pathologies. The outside world, with the actions that people might enact, provides us with an experience in which we need to be aware of the psychological, as well as rational. Without a decent education, at least informally on one's own, it is difficult to think that an individual can function in a balanced way in this world. Education comes to us by means of both formal, as well as informal aspects. These aspects help to formulate a means by which we as individuals can grow, and learn about the world around us.

Sociologically, we find ourselves in a position where we are meant to be part of a technologically advanced, globalized world, and at the same time conform to those standards handed down to us by virtue of being born. Where we are born, the conditions in which we live, and our access to the basic necessities of life all come together to influence just how far we will allow ourselves to go when it comes to focusing on the intellectual. Since this is situational, no individual person can be faulted for not having learned certain traits, skills, or characteristics that are helpful to one's own life.

We are at the mercy of situational forces which gather around us, and influence us in profound ways that must be accounted for. Not everyone can afford to think about eternal things, and this is especially so if one's own basic needs are not being met. Psychologically, the individual that is experiencing a deficit in any area of life can find themselves suffering.

There is no talent so great, no aspiration so high, that the individual cannot but pause and think about the possibilities that exist in this world. These possibilities concern the vocational aspect of life, one's own abilities or natural talents, and the ability to transcend one's own lot in this world to a degree. There is a limit, of course, to what we can accomplish based on our own natures, but this is simply a matter of fact that must be contended with individually. Once we accept our limitations, as well as our strengths, we are then possibly able to utilize tools which are at our disposal to modify, or improve our station in life.

We can do all these things, and accept those things which we cannot change. To do so is the most human sort of thing possible. We currently cannot transcend past the limitations of our senses, and it is because of this that we must be humble. Perhaps there will come a day when we will be able to say that we have done something revolutionary through technological augmentation. Until that day, we must remain where we are on more than one level.

In order to grow as a person, it should be said that there must be a recall of those things that are exemplary of our weakness as a species. Psychologically, we must be prepared to delve deeply into our own minds, and come to the realization that we are lowly creatures. Yes, we have consciousness, and a sense of self-awareness, but is this enough to take us anywhere existentially? Arthur Schopenhauer once remarked that animals do not have the same sense of mortality that we do, and made the distinction between their consciousness and ours in the natural order of things.

The will is such that our desires are enmeshed with that which we would deign to do in the causal world. Our actions show a very outward manifestation of an inner process which begins at the level of the subjective mind. It is through subjectivity that we find ourselves begging the question as to whether we will ever understand the meaning of things as they exist. This situation has been with us for a very long time, and it is through the various generations that we see a repetition of this experience.

How then should we proceed in this world, and continue to live with the knowledge that we shall die? The will is certainly affected by this knowledge. Desire is informed by it. Throughout recorded history there are a plethora of examples of the death obsession in art, literature, and in customs. We can see it even today as our society progresses just how much death has informed us.

Dr. Carl Jung, in his *Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology* states ardently that "In neurosis we speak of an infantile attitude or the predominance of infantile phantasies and desires. In so far as infantile impressions and desires are of obvious importance in normal people they are equally influential in neurosis, but they have here no etiological significance, they are reactions merely, being chiefly secondary and regressive phenomena." Neuroses are indicative of a conflict within the individual, and this is shown forth by means of mental regression, as Dr. Jung suggests. We can choose to ignore our propensity for neurotic thinking, as well as the abnormal, but ultimately it would not be in our best interests.

What is in our best interests is determined in the end by ourselves, for there is no one else that can make these choices for us. We live, and we struggle through this world one way or another, etching out an existence for ourselves one day at a time. Yet, there seems to be something missing. What that something is, I cannot personally identify. As a placeholder for my ignorance, I will assume that it is our lack of understanding of what happens to consciousness after death that is the biggest problem of purpose, and meaning.

There are still some in this world that propose knowing the exact answers to the conditions we face as human beings, and that is through the various religious traditions as practiced throughout the world. The truth of the matter is that all these responses, whether it be in the form of religious, or even philosophical ideas, are the result of a human nature that is fragile. We cannot know the purpose of things in terms of the metaphysical because we do not have direct access to these experiences objectively.

We must remember that we were thrust into this world outside of our consent. No matter how much we love this life, it must be emphasized that there is a connection between the state of non-existence, and our own original state prior to conception. This connection lies simply in the fact that they are one, and the same as non-existent, acausal, and beyond the scope of human understanding. It is through meditation on death that we can begin to understand what it must have been like prior to our existence. That is, the state of the tranquility of nothingness, of the acausal, and the silence of eternity found through death.

Death is the great experience in which we must realize that we shall one day also pass through the veil of it. Knowing this should give us reason to pause, and think deeply on our inner purpose for existing. What can we do to turn our understanding of the world into one that encompasses death as a true reality? The only way we can do that is by acknowledging the facts surrounding death, and the dying process from an intellectual point of view.

The individual is alone responsible for their response to the recognition of death. This is a powerful statement because it recognizes the need for the individual to make a choice, rather than be forced into something. There are limited choices that we have in this world, and our recognition of death is one of them. It is obvious that everyone knows about death, and the reality that we will all die someday is universally understood. But there is often no reflection accompanying this knowledge.

True reflection on death is one in which we decide consciously to educate ourselves regarding the physiological processes involved, as well as on other matters of the health sciences concerning the body. Doing this involves a specific effort on behalf of the individual to seek out this information actively. By doing this, the individual then can undertake the responsibility, and approach towards death that is mature, and nuanced in understanding. What I mean by this is that the processes of death, decay, and other scientific facts should be independently studied by the individual in order to better understand the various facets of death as a reality.

Once death is accepted, and understood better by the individual, it is then that there is a possibility of a certain stoicism regarding the matter developing within the psyche. The mind of the individual is malleable in the sense that we are all able to learn throughout our lifespan regardless of age. This is an important point to be made, and this is because it must be said that it is never too late to be humbled by the prospect of our deaths. Learning is implicitly about understanding the world on a level that allows us to accept our deaths with dignity, and erudition.

Education is something that is so important, even if it is informal outside of an academic setting. The more we are willing to learn about ourselves, the more we will be able to utilize tools of understanding regarding our finite natures. These tools include psychological aspects of education, as well as the understanding of the natural sciences. We can only surmise that the more we study these things, the more we will be able to accept our own deaths in a stoic way.

Of course, we have the choice to flail about, and go slowly insane from the overwhelming nature of the world around us if we let ourselves be unchecked for long. It is in our nature to veer off into the abnormal when we look too long at the details behind life, and death, and analyze both to the point of severe scrutiny. The more we understand about the world around us, the greater the chance that we too could go mad. Certainly, this is a distinct possibility, yet it is not one which is set in stone for everyone.

There are many who are able to compartmentalize cosmic, and scientific knowledge in such a way that it does not disturb their inner composure. This is all well, and good, yet there are also many who suffer from the propensity towards mental illness. It is about these individuals that I am speaking of when I say that it is possible to become insane, unhinged, and without foundation. It is possible for anyone to lose their sense of grounding when it comes to the contemplation of eternity, and death. This is understandable because cosmic things have a profound effect upon human beings.

The cosmic is the ultimate level in terms of contemplating the grand scheme of things. If we look at the cosmic, we are thinking in terms of that which is beyond the scope of the individual. There is no one that can truly declare they have a foundational grounding in relation to the cosmic because it is so vastly remote from us in terms of scope. We are so incredibly small in comparison to the heavenly bodies that it is amazing that we have any grounding at all to stand on philosophically. Of course, we know what we know about reality through our senses, and through the scientific method. Yet, we are so insignificant in the big picture that it is hard at times to think about these things with any sort of rationality.

Nonetheless, we cannot simply just admit our smallness, and give up completely. The world around us is something that demands recognition, and attention to the smallest of details regarding reality. This includes all the constructs that have been devised for us throughout life, and of those which we have ourselves created over time. We have a primal need to separate fact from fiction, and to delve into intellectual things. This is simply something that we do as humans, regardless of the efficacy of our troubles to find out the truth.

As I previously mentioned, it is possible to make the choice to allow ourselves to fall apart mentally when thinking about the big picture. It is also possible that we, as individuals, can transcend our limitations through the use of logic, and reasoning. Though we may never find out the exact nature of reality beyond the information passed down to us, and by our senses, we still must carry on if we are to choose to survive. By this, I mean that if we want to live, and survive this world, we had better choose to seek out the answers to the world around us.

Even if we cannot know the fullness of the truth, it is important to continue on as if there was at least a remote possibility of learning this. This is the desire of mankind to emerge into the causal world through the power of will. Our very nature is such that we continue to seek out answers for things which are difficult to decipher either because we don't have all the information, or because we currently cannot know due to limitations.

The world is chaotic. We must examine each part of life as it comes to us from a rational perspective. This much has been established. Within the wellspring of the identity of each individual lies a more profound truth; that of the fact that we know we are destined for the grave. We have to learn to navigate around this fact in such a manner that we prolong our current lives despite this knowledge.

The will is where we gather strength internally. It is through the power of desire that there is a foundational eruption of creativity that is brought about because of our knowledge of death. This knowledge makes us all the more human because it causes us to create various things in this world which have aesthetic, emotional, and sometimes scientific value.

Through the power of the subjective mind, we are cognizant of our place in the universe, however crude our understanding of that might be. We do not know exactly where we are, but we do know that we exist, and that we thirst for knowledge, and accomplishment. Our desires to overcome death through leaving an artistic (or familial) legacy can also be examined further as an aspect of the human mind.

We alone are responsible for our actions in this world. Certainly, we are born into a world of limitations, but we do have a choice as to how we will interact with others. Will we be creative, and artistic? Or will we be destructive? These are important questions that have no black, and white answers. We are all capable of creating, and destroying our various stations in this life. Each one of us has the ability to leave a mark on this world.

Because we are responsible for our actions, we are also deeply alone in this world. Of course, we do have interactions, and connections with others most often at some point in our lives. Yet, there is a sense of loneliness that cannot be described adequately with words as it is of a cosmic import rather than a simple passing thought. This loneliness is universal to all human beings as it can be felt without any specificity to its expression.

Chapter Eight

Returning to the Concept of Self-Awareness as Being Foundational.

To be self-aware is to be conscious of who we are from the ground up, as well as of those things within us that are constructs rather than real. The more we learn about ourselves, we come closer to the edge of despair. This is not to say that we will necessarily become despairing, it is just that there is a closer proximity to despair in concert with knowing more. It is possible to end up being completely optimistic when considering the whole of life, despite the outcome which is death.

Nonetheless, it is through the hardships that we come across in life that we learn about the true nature of meaning, and purpose. Meaning, and purpose can only be created by the individual, and this is because there are no solid guidelines as to how we should live our lives outside of religious, and other traditional cultural influences. We must determine our goals for ourselves, and then follow through with attaining them for the sake of the goal itself. If there is no purpose to life outside of subjective experiences, we should then determine what it is we wish to accomplish whilst we live.

Self-awareness is foundational to the core of who we are as human beings. It is through introspection, self-education, and rational thinking that we are able to determine what is best for us regarding the course of our lives. Sometimes we make mistakes, and are not able to accomplish one goal or another due to situations that arise. Other times it seems as if what we seek out, we are able to find rather easily. It is with the knowledge of the fact that we are imperfect that we must approach goals, ideals, and thoughts concerning our own path in this world. This is the foundation upon which we must build our lives. Everything that we experience is bound to disappear one day when we die.

Death is our constant companion because it is through the awareness of our fragility that we are truly humbled on an individual level. Every

action that we take has the shadow of death behind it, inclusive of every conversation we have, every aspiration or goal, and every moment of pleasure or pain. The more we are in touch with our inner emotions, the more we are able to live as authentically as possible. This authenticity is one in which the individual lives out their deepest desires in a creative way that has an impact on the world. It is through this impact that others can benefit from the impression that we have made upon the world whilst we live, thereby sowing the seeds of a legacy that can be left behind.

Despair is something that can be described but must be experienced in order to truly understand what it means to live through emptiness. The emptiness deep down inside of our very being is universal in nature even though it is subjectively experienced. Certainly, we have a propensity to find meaning, and positive experiences in this life, of this there is no doubt. However, it must be said that despair trumps all other emotional experiences because of the profound nature of despondency itself. We all have experienced despair at some point in this life, whether it has been only temporary or chronically dealt with.

It is through sadness, loneliness, and other experiences of the human intellect that we find ourselves understanding the depths of melancholy, and the tragic. Our awareness of the world around us keeps us painfully knowledgeable about our lot in life. That which deals with the morose, and the mournful is ever present in the subjective mind of the individual. It is always there, even if it is relegated to the unconscious portions of the mind.

In every smile, every moment of bliss, or joy, there are the pangs of suffering lurking around the corner, and mentally entering into our sphere of knowledge. As we experience pleasure in this world, there is a faint trace of the suffering which is to inevitably come in some form. Despair aligns us with our true nature which is to experience the world in a profound way that is often unspeakable. Because it is unspeakable it is inadequate for me to write or expound upon it, but I will make the best attempt possible.

Our obsession with living, and maintaining a lifestyle of health, and decent standards is one in which we find ourselves bound by environmental, social, and other factors of which self-interest is paramount. This begs the question as to whether or not this is a sincere form of self-delusion because even if we maintain ourselves healthy, we shall die one day. Of course, this is not to dissuade anyone from living an active lifestyle. Far from it. The purpose of what I am saying amounts to a questioning of our foundations from the ground up. We must be willing to dissect every aspect of what makes us human in order to understand our position as individuals in this world.

When we question the world around us, we are then able to take off the various masks which we wear in front of others, even if it is for a little while. What I mean is that we can take an honest look at ourselves the moment we question who we are, what we are doing here, and what our purpose is.

I have witnessed individuals go through despair in its various forms over the years. There is a sense of hopelessness that one cannot do anything to assuage the grief that forces us to pause, and think about our priorities. This is a normal feeling to have, especially because it is only natural that we as humans attempt to find a way to help others in their time of need. We are not always successful in doing so, and this shows through in situations where there is more nuance than black or white.

Death is the antidote to pride, and this is evidenced by how people react when they are forced to deal with it head on. A sudden accident, a stroke, a heart attack, or some other pathological condition could develop in someone you know or care about. What do you do other than attempt to assist them the best that you can? Surely, we must know just how fragile we truly are when we realize just how easy it is to suffer from any number of illnesses or diseases. No one knows what the future holds when it comes to the manner of how death will overtake us. This is one of the great mysteries of life, in that pathological conditions can cause a sudden, and fulminating onset of disease.

We cannot realistically live our lives with every second being counted as possibly being our last, but it is healthy to have at least the concept in the background of one's daily life. The contextual is important to focus on here, especially when it comes to whether or not death is ultimately seen as relevant to one's own being. The fact of the matter is that we all will have to decide as to how we are going to approach death. This is where self-awareness comes in, and informs us of the facts surrounding our own eventual demise.

As we walk through this world, we are continuously under the spell of simply existing, and not actively confronting the source of our anguish. We go through so many trials, and tribulations that it is admittedly hard to focus on seemingly abstract concepts like one's own future death. Nonetheless, it is important to reflect on such things because at some point we are going to have to face reality. The more we prepare ourselves for death, the closer we will come to that authenticity of being which is centered on an awareness of mortality.

Our awareness of the world around us allows us to function at a level which keeps us striving to survive in an often-hostile environment. We can continue to live life without reflecting on this awareness, but we will ultimately deceive ourselves by doing so. What I mean by this is that it is through the construct of the self that we must strive to overcome our ultimate circumstances which prevent us from living our lives to the fullest. It is when we decide to become aware of our cognitive faults that we then can realize that life is ultimately out of our control. Yes, we have control over some things in this world but that which is the *most fundamental* we do **not** have any control over.

Confrontation with one's own inner thoughts allows for there to be a sense of understanding when it comes to the subjective. By this, I mean that we can dissect to a degree those things which internally punish us by means of mental anguish. The anguish that we feel when we reflect on death keeps us aligned mentally with the absurd in life. When we see life as being as absurd as it is, we then are able to start to free ourselves.

None of us has the power to change our ultimate fate which is that of death. It is through the death drive that we manifest our ultimate desires towards self-annihilation, even if we outwardly choose life. We do not actively seek out to destroy ourselves, but when we re-create ourselves fundamentally through education or other means we are figuratively dying for ourselves. The symbolic is important when focusing on the death drive, as it is found primarily within the unconscious mind of the individual. Our awareness of death is extremely important as well because it keeps us honest with ourselves in our day to day lives.

Being aware also means focusing internally upon those things which are fundamental in this world; namely the causal, and death. It is through both the causal, as well as death that we find ourselves attempting to bargain with fate regarding our mortality. We often hear in passing stories about people that have suffered tremendously before dying, but we do not often think of ourselves in those situations. No, to us it seems almost impossible that we could die in horrendous ways, but that is our self-bias showing.

It is through the near-death experience that individuals learn the nature of the fragility of the human body. Very few have experienced this, but for those who have there is an advantageous gift provided by it through enhanced death awareness. Being forced to experience something so harrowing as nearly dying can cause one to internally dissect just how easily we can pass away. This is an important distinction to make; that the individual that has experienced a near-death experience has an advantage over the one that has not.

By means of introspection, the individual is able to set forth a mental passage for themselves whereby the ability to look humbly at death becomes real. This humility influences every aspect of life because it represents an authenticity that can only come through inward-facing thought processes. These thought processes are based on a combination of real-life experiences alongside ideas surrounding death. When the individual is at their most humble, the truth of being is revealed.

This truth of being is one in which there is nothing that exists other than the current moment, alongside the inevitability of our future demise. In the wake of the death of the self through a reconstruction of one's own personality through traumatic experience, the individual is able to thereby take charge of the responsibility of being present in the moment. It is in the ever-fleeting present moment that we live, and we shall continue to do so until the day we die.

There is no one that can escape the power of the present moment, even if one were to cater to mental distractions. It is always there in every step we take along this journey we call life. In the end-scheme of things, it is in the present moment that we learn to appreciate the ephemeral nature of life. Everything changes, inclusive of the seasons. We are continuously at the mercy of not only the present moment but also of change itself. It is through the changes that we experience that we are also reminded of our mortality. Grey hairs, wrinkles, and other physical characteristics serve only to remind us that *we too* are beholden to change at all times.

The world owes us no explanation as to the events that occur in the causal realm of the physical. It is up to us to discover the fundamental scientific truths regarding the human species, as well as the nature of death, and dying. We are in a cold, vast space, and we wander around in search of answers to questions that may not have direct answers available to us. We have to understand that there is a certain point at which we have to realize that discovery takes time.

Discovery is a feature of human cognition, especially because it is the driving force behind the inner expression of desire manifested through the will. When we are cognizant of this reality, we can then utilize the power of the will to express our fundamental human rights, and freedoms. Of course, this freedom, and these rights have a responsibility attached to them. From birth we have assumed the responsibility of expanding individual agency through the desire that comes from within to survive. We are, first, and foremost, survivors, and this is a poignant truth that we must reflect on deeply.

We are born into a world where the fight for individual agency is one of moral, ethical, and sociological importance. Our ability to be self-aware to the extent that we are places demands on us internally to advance our rights as human beings. The recognition of these rights is not internationally received, or recognized, but this is just one further example of the depths of despair that cognizance brings with it. It is through the structures of our societal framework that we are forced to live our lives, and depending on where we live, these very same structures can be destructive to the individual.

There is no use in trying to fight the truth before us that death is ever present. We must recognize this, and move forward with the rest of our lives. By doing so, we enrich ourselves, and the lives of those around us by appreciating each moment that passes through the void of time. There is a desperation that clings onto our very being regarding life, and death. This desperation is expressed through distractions, as well as other divergencies which plague us in our daily lives.

Despite our grand destiny which is death, we have this life to live, and experience the world around us. It would appear as though we lived in a deserted place even though it is populated with other people. To clarify, it would seem as though we are destined to be alone in our struggle with death as it is an experience that we will all go through utterly alone. This is something we can choose to make peace with through simple acceptance of the truth. By doing so, we allow ourselves space to be able to heal mentally so that we can live our lives in some modicum of peace.

By peace I do not mean being completely free of conflict, as I am referring to an inner peace which cannot be swayed by the outside causal world. A resolution, if you will, to allow oneself to be a survivor in the wilderness that we call this life. Perhaps this is the highest aim; to be free in life through mental detachment from the pain, and grief that surrounds us continuously. This detachment does not indicate in any way a disavowing of pain, or grief, but a recognition of it through mental tranquility. It is possible that this is the highest mental state we could strive for.

When we are in our youth we seldom think about death, or about anything other than the myriad of possibilities that seemed strewn about for us. We also are very curious, yet very confused about the nature of things, and how reality interacts with us on a fundamental level. This is to be expected, because the brain doesn't stop developing until one is in their mid to late twenties. Everyone goes through the developmental process in the cycle of maturation, and this is something that is completely natural. When we are mature, we start to realize that some of the ideals we held in our youth were not solid enough foundationally for there to be any purpose in following them anymore.

It is through our nature that we must continue to live our lives. It is in this limited nature that we find ourselves struggling with what we can know, versus what we do not know. This has been an issue that is at the heart of humanity, and is timeless in the sense that we have always experienced it. None of us can determine what is outside of our senses because we simply do not have access to that portion of reality. It is outside of our peripheral view, and cannot be accessed. This is what brings so much despair to the world around us.

Though we are in the mire of despair, we still strive to live this life, and carry on, in general. There is a great inner tenacity, and strength that can be found in each one of us. This inner tenacity, and strength, is something that is at the core of our foundation as human beings. It is part, and parcel of the will, and the underlying primal desire behind it. The primal desire that manifests as the will forms a union in which it is hard to distinguish the two. What I mean here is that desire is so strong of a feature of human cognition that it is indistinguishable from the will.

We are always surrounded by conflicts, changes, and other obstacles that stand in our way when it comes to living our lives. These things are often temporary, but they still get in our way when it comes to attempting to achieve something. This situation can bring about with it another form of despair which often has no cure; that of ennui. It is through ennui that we become weary of the world around us, and often become avoidant.

In the end scheme of things, we are in a position where we must choose to either live life to the fullest, or collapse mentally under the stress of the world. Self-awareness is something we all possess, but we do not readily appreciate it for what it is; a means by which we can enter into a deeper sense of understanding regarding the intricacies of life. When we are born, we are like a blank canvas, and we accumulate knowledge through instinct, socialization, and environmental factors. It is through the power of the intellect that we are able to transcend our lowly positions in life, and mentally take charge of our inner mental world.

Our ability to survive difficulties such as physical, or mental disabilities keeps us cognizant of the fact that we are indeed survivors. All of humanity cries out for the power of survival, and the strength of the will. In our final days, perhaps we will look back on life, and understand that suffering was always present even when we experienced moments of pleasure. We can only assume that we will be able to understand the aspects of suffering when we are on our death beds.

The constructs that surround us are artificial in the sense that they do not represent the actual truth about life. Constructs, such as personal identity, and the concept of the persona we have developed over time for ourselves, are all superficial at the end of our lives. We will, at some point, recognize that almost everything we have learned about ourselves has been a farce. The truth of who we are lies deep within the core of the psychological makeup of the individual. This is influenced by environmental, social, and interpersonal interactions throughout the lifespan of the individual.

Despair comes to us when we least expect it to. We are continuously assailed on all sides by the diverse challenges we face on a daily basis. This is reflected in our psychological makeup, as we are capable of exhibiting pathological illnesses as a result of our interaction with the world. The world is continuously pushing us toward an identity which is based on the superficial, rather than the profound. This is the sociological aspect of human life; in that it is influenced greatly by the outside world.

Otto Rank, and Hanns Sachs state in their work *The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences* emphatically that "We will not be surprised to find that the average man, as daydreamer, finds the same enjoyment in the production of such phantasies as the hearer of a poem in its reception. Both functions are in essential aspects identical, in so far as the reception of a phantasy consists only in the fact that it is experienced." It is through the aesthetic, and artistic, that the mind can find refuge in the mire that is self-awareness. Of course, an understanding of the sciences is also important, but a case must also be made for the arts.

In the abstract we find ourselves looking introspectively towards the inner worlds that we inhabit in our minds. Causal reality is something we all face, but do not fully understand. With the power of our minds, we are able to dissect the various aspects of life, and look toward the subjective as an additional dimension in understanding. The world around us, as I have previously stated, is complex, and we can only navigate it insofar as we have educated ourselves thoroughly.

To conclude this essay, I will go over the main objectives behind my theories. One objective is to elucidate the condition of mankind in that we are beholden to despair due to our self-awareness. Another objective is that we must look toward the subjective to decipher those aspects of reality which the senses only give us clues about. Thirdly, and finally, my main objective is to open a discussion regarding life, and death, as I see it.

Ultimately, we are all in a position where we must accept our eventual deaths, and live today as if this very moment is all that we have. Each passing moment that goes by is an opportunity to open our minds to the possibilities that exist in the causal world. We may never fully understand the reasons for why we exist, where consciousness goes after death, or the true nature of the objective world, and this is okay. All of us are united in our despair towards the world, even if we are loathe to admit it even to ourselves. There is happiness to be had, as well as moments of fleeting pleasure, but we are by necessity never satisfied with attaining our goals. In the end of all things, we are alone in our experience of this world.

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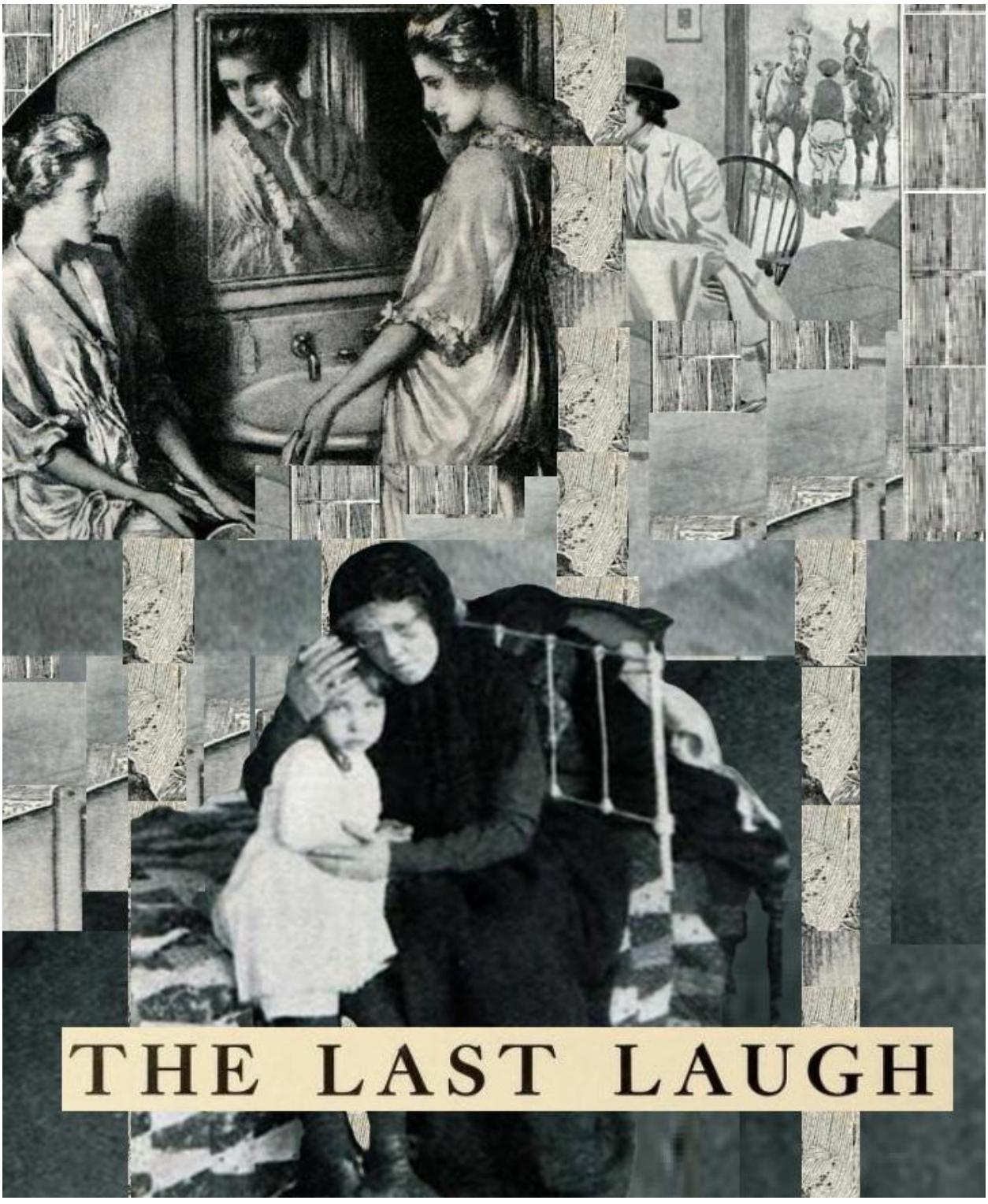
THE LAST LAUGH

Essay on Self-Annihilation

Preface

The origins of my philosophy regarding self-annihilation are twofold; that of rendering the self-obsolete through re-creation, and that of actual death. It is through death that we can become honest with ourselves, in that we can begin to see anew those things which we had taken for granted in our youths. Rather than being a simple subject, death is a manifestation of intricately enlaced physical, mental, and often problematic self-aware idealism turned inward. What I mean by this is that there is not just the simple appearance of death as a physical occurrence. It is also multidimensional, and quite complex in nature.

Often, when we think on death, we do not realize just how regularly we experience its effects. There are psychological repercussions to the experience of another's death, as well as ideological. For those of us who have experienced the loss of a loved one, we cannot forget those moments of silent clarity whereby words were just not enough to describe our emotional state. In the ecstasy of melancholic thoughts, we experience the heights, and very depths of the human essence unfold in front of our very eyes.

This is, of course, part of the totality of human experience. Death is but one apparition among many in the shadow play we call life. We experience grief, difficulties, and all sorts of troubles daily in such a way as to almost mitigate the profound effects death has upon us. It is amazing to observe the level of pain that human beings can withstand, inclusive of the dying process (of one's own self, or another). Perhaps it is within the experience of pain that we can find a clue as to how we can utilize such internal power for the preparative stages of the dying process. Each death is unique in that no one person experiences it the same way. Some experience violent deaths, others prolonged in some way, while still others have a sudden onset of some illness that wastes them away quickly.

It is important here that I state what my intentions are with this essay, as my reasoning is manifold. The purpose of this essay is to elaborate on the conceptualizations that I propose, which relate to death as well as rebirth on a psychological level. My theory is that death can be viewed from a symbolic, as well as psychological standpoint, whereby the individual is able to make apparent those inner strengths which allow us to face the unknown. There is, of course, the usual morbid curiosity for wanting to explore this topic in such depths, but this is merely one out of many reasons for my personal investment in these ideas.

Death is a topic that holds many cultural taboos because of the lack of reliance on the survival instinct when probing, thinking, or idealizing about it. Much has been written on the subject from scientific, religious, and speculative literature throughout the centuries, and this essay is merely part of a wide spectrum of thoughts on the matter. There is a strong element of logic that must be followed by myself, the author, if I am to continue a train of thought that has a rational beginning, middle, and end. In whatever aspect of death that I focus on, I must be willing to concede that my theories are simply those which are built upon the foundations of intuition, knowledge, and the reflection on the mystery that is the end of life. Any additional ideas surrounding the topic must be relegated to the sidelines, as it were, because the topic is too conflated without a narrower focus on the essential form of the matter.

It is through life that we gather the necessary internal resources to realize the growing importance of death-awareness in our day-to-day existence. For some it begins as early as their youth prior to adulthood. For others, there is a raging denial of death that is so profound that it requires a process of unlearning those things which we have been told to suppress about ourselves. For there to be some form of growth as an individual, the realities of death must be confronted face-forward into that stygian abyss. The aspects of death which creep into our ordinary lives remains the most important portion of this essay, rather than the process of dying itself.

Nonetheless, I will attempt to focus on both concepts as they relate to the understanding of the essential brokenness of humanity.

Our subconscious mind is entrained on the ideas that death brings, regardless of how little we may care to admit this. To clarify, I mean that all life is tainted by the presence of death despite our lack of focus on the subject. Whether we are planning a wedding, looking for a new career, or settling down into an unremarkable position in life, every person on this planet is experiencing some form of the ever-present shadow of death.

The conscious, as well as the unconscious, must be the centers of conflict resolution within the mind for there to be an acceptance of death. We must appeal to our inner minds, as well as our educated conscious awareness regarding the recognition of the end of all things. This is merely a declaration that for us to be fully human, and embrace our dignity, we must be honest on an intellectual, as well as emotional level. This is not an easy task for many, because it requires active meditation on those things which do not contribute to our baseline of happiness.

We cannot continue, as a society, or as individual cultures, with the looming aspects of death that are considered taboo or uncouth to speak of. If we measure our success by how well we have entertained such ideas, I am afraid to say that we have fallen below any acceptable level of death awareness. Our best men, and women, create technologies, and curate scientific discoveries which no doubt benefit everyone of us in the short term, but do not strive with the same endurance to understand the mysteries of death. We are hopelessly downtrodden by our pre-conceived notions of what it means to cease to exist that we focus on creating things in this world which are of temporal use to us. Certainly, future generations (something that is not even promised to us by life) will benefit from our inventions, and ideas, but they do not circle around to the very point I am attempting to address; that of death, and its manifestation in the mundane. Regardless of how steeped we are in our cultural milieu, we must be willing to leave our comfort zones, as it were, and take the reins of our personal responsibilities towards ourselves as individuals.

Introduction

I have decided to write about self-annihilation not from merely a nihilistic standpoint, but a psychological one. The aspects of death are myriad, and require a dissection of intellectual conceptualizations that relate to our understanding of it. There is a distinction that should be made between the understanding of death, and the experience of dying from a subjective point of view. Both aspects of the subject at hand are important to focus on, because as we shall see they are intertwined inextricably with one another.

As with my prior work, *Reflections on Death, Suicide, and Ethical Euthanasia*, I have found myself amid a very difficult topic to discuss. It is not simply the truth of the matter that death is the great unknown, but also that it is the manifestation of all our fears, despair, and melancholy regarding its presence in our lives. If there is a limit to understanding the topic of death, I have not reached it, and I doubt anyone else will soon either. Therefore, it is so important to discuss death as a serious matter because it involves adjacent ideals related to ethical standards, and personal agency.

Personal agency is one way of stating that there is an expression of being that is wholly individual in nature. The ethics behind personal agency involve considerations ranging from how we see the world around us to how we live our lives. It is through ethical consideration that we can make apparent those hidden truths about humanity that not all are willing to see; namely the imminence of death around us. The power of self-agency allows us to determine our own path toward the journey surrounding death, even if we cannot control the how or when regarding our own demise. Unmistakably, it is through the inner workings of an integrated mind that will push the boundaries of what we perceive to be a moral life in the lens of what death holds in store for us.

There is a profound psychology behind the will to live, and die. In my last four books, I have discussed the will as essentially holding the imprinting of the death impulse: a manifestation of the subconscious desire for self-annihilation in direct opposition to the survival instinct. We no doubt find ourselves directing our energies toward that which preserves our lives in many instances routinely. The death impulse is adjacent to the survival instinct, however, because it is one of the ways our unconscious mind brings to light our inner obsession with dying.

The death impulse is not merely a wish for self-annihilation, but a regenerative one that mirrors the more profound aspects of the death we will eventually face as human beings. We must come to terms with the fact that we too shall die one day, and each day is merely a dress rehearsal for the final moments of life. It is through the death impulse that we channel our energies toward the creative, as well as scientific. This is the case because all concrete advancements in humanity are tainted by the specter of death.

Many of us wish to create some sort of legacy for us to leave behind when we pass away. Why is it that we feel this way? It could have to do with the inconceivability of death as a manifestation of that which we cannot fully perceive. By creating, discovering, and marching forward in technological advancements we are essentially acting out our own deaths through the sweat of our brows. Some of us have children, others have their careers, while the rest of us scramble for some sort of meaning in the depths of this strange life.

Our minds must be aligned with the conceptualizations that we create for ourselves for there to be a balance between the psychology of life, as well as death. Past generations have created the amazing technological, scientific, and psychological advancements which we currently enjoy. Why is it that we as human beings feel we have the need to be altruistic to a generation we will never see? Some of us have religious, ethical, and moral beliefs which guide us toward the creation of these advancements, while others merely struggle to find meaning in it all.

Death is a catalyst for change, because it does not need to be experienced in the literal sense for it to affect an individual. It surrounds us in its perpetuity through the daily rituals of living which come from learned unconscious actions. We pace back, and forth throughout life in an endless search for possibilities; ever striving to function on some deeper level through meaning which has always been elusive to us. It is through death that we can measure our worth in this life because we will all have to pass through that experience at some point.

As mentioned, change can occur through the symbolic, as well as literal, experience of the dying process. Under the influence of the subconscious mind, we are emboldened to strike forth a path for ourselves through diligence, and long-suffering feats of strength (on a mental, as well as physical level). We amaze ourselves continuously at the endurance we have as a species, because we are perpetually engineering new ideas into reality. This is the sort of change I mean when I am referring to how death can be a catalyst.

Other than the very real specter of eventual oblivion, we cannot imagine the human spirit lacking in the very palpable desire to continue living regardless of experienced suffering. Of course, there are always exceptions, and these are designated as the fruit of the death impulse which is never far away from us at any time. Even in our greatest dreams we cannot escape the influence of death upon us. Everything we can think of is tainted with the severity of the dying process.

The world itself is full of examples of how death is always close by. From the greatest architecture, to sculpture, and other types of art (inclusive of literature), we see the emergence of non-being through a concentration on liminal spaces that are often unconscious. For entertainment we dream up ideas of plots, characters, and story lines in our fiction to distract us from the reality of how close we are to death. The denial of the death impulse leads to a strange façade of life which imposes itself upon any who would fall into its ideological trap. Therefore, I believe

that there should be an openminded conversation on death throughout society.

Self-annihilation represents not merely a destruction of the individual on a physical level, but a psychological one specifically. What I mean by this is that there are endless possibilities for the individual that chooses to walk away from themselves, and their very identity. By walking away, I do not mean a more severe act such as suicide. I am referring to the rare ability of individuals to reinvent themselves from the ground up.

The psychological manifests itself in the desire to rectify one's own past with the possibilities of a future that is yet unknown. Some people choose to lose themselves in a hobby, while others bury themselves in a career of some fashion. Still others elect a different path, which is to say that loneliness, and solitude are chosen. Those who find themselves to be in the latter aspect of reality have more opportunities to reflect on their own mortality than some busy-body workaholic, or hunting enthusiast. This is not to say that we as a species overall cannot experience deep reflection regardless of station in life, it is just that many choose not to reflect at all.

There is power behind the philosophy of self-annihilation because it focuses on death not merely as a physical manifestation but a psychological one which carries us along our subjective journeys throughout life. Self-annihilation, as mentioned, does not refer simply to a physical act, but to a mental one that can be a catalyst for great change. It is through death that we can see through clear eyes of truth. This truth shows itself to be real in that it focuses on the logical, rational, and empirical which everyone can experience (albeit in a paradoxically subjective way).

The eminence of death in our lives need not be a cause for fear, loneliness, or some other form of melancholia which grips us to the very core at times. It can be a transformative experience that brings us closer to our own authenticity as individuals, whatever that may mean for us

separately from one another. This authenticity is a powerful expression of self-willed autonomy which is a foundational principle in the world.

Though self-rumination on the destruction of one's own life is often dangerous; it can be done with the intent to profoundly change one's life course. What I mean by this is that thoughts of a suicidal, or depressive nature need not be seen as being exclusively negative or harmful. I am not advocating for anyone to harm themselves in any way, and this is clear throughout my philosophy. What I do intend to illustrate here is that the morbid predilections of an individual can lead to a powerful life change that is affirmative, rather than destructive.

Death consciousness brings us together as human beings because it is universal in its basic knowledge among all peoples. We all have different folk stories regarding death, but none of that matters in the light of the universal psychological, and scientific knowledge we all have available to us through the click of a button. Through greater interconnectedness in modern society, we can disseminate fundamental truths regarding death, and dying from esteemed experts that is peer reviewed.

The reason I focus so heavily on logic, and reason is because we must consider the implications of any given philosophy on the world around us. If there is not a logical path from one destination to another, there cannot be a solidified foundational theory to consider seriously. Therefore, my intentions here in this essay remain steadfastly focused on utilizing the scientific, as well as psychological in rationalizing my ideals. Should these concepts not be backed by solid ideas, then my entire theory on self-annihilation will find itself alone in a sea of other failed philosophies.

Nonetheless, I intend to focus directly on the matter at hand which is that death surrounds us in every waking moment of this life. When we are creative, and express ourselves through art, literature, or some other form of performance, we are vocalizing the fundamental human need for understanding, and togetherness. We want others to understand where we come from, even if this means that we are communicating openly about

our *own* deaths. An emergence of the death impulse, founded as it is on the same basis as the survival instinct, allows for there to be a deeper expression of the morbidity surrounding non-being.

Chapter One

Exploring the Primitive through an Intense Focus on the Subconscious Mind.

We return to the primitive through reflection on instinct over rationality. What I mean by this is that it is through a state of non-thought that we observe how we are overcome by our base nature. Ages of evolution have allowed us to become hyper aware of the nature of the world around us, despite the calls of would-be preachers to abjure scientific discovery. Our level of advancement is such that we are caught often between the desires to fulfill our baser needs with those of the logical, and rational.

There is a line between the conscious, and the unconscious, as well as the causal, and acausal. This line is an ideological one in which we can see the differences between the objective, and subjective world in which we experience life.

We experience things which can be objectively real in the sense that we corroborate our perspective with others on subjects that deal with physical properties. Each of these properties are fundamental to a grounded understanding of the varied aspects of the psychological foundations of mankind.

I can observe that there are properties to physical objects that can be felt, and seen by others. What makes us unique in our experience of the world? It could be that there is a subjective experience of the objective found in everyone through unique variations of thoughts. To clarify, I mean that we all have our unique individual responses to how real-world objects affect us. Something as simple as a ball can, when held, elicit ideas regarding that object in which the individual creates a subjective space for their own thoughts.

Our focus on the mundane distracts us from the inner truths found through meditation on the primitive mind. We are constrained by our limited will; daily our experiences are focused on the bare necessities of life without regard to the profound nature of existence. This is not something that is done on purpose at all. Quite the opposite is true. Our survival skills as individuals allow us to function on a beneficial level through ignoring those profound obscurities of eternal concepts such as death awareness.

We have our survival to contend with, and that is enough for many to keep away from those ideas surrounding our mortality. There can be no blaming those who choose to ignore the truth of the matter, because it is through an intimate understanding of death that the individual simultaneously matures, and finds themselves on the edge of insanity. We all share the ancestral curse of being forced to navigate life with the knowledge of our mortality. Some of us choose to ignore these facts to our own psychic detriment.

Nonetheless, we are all in some way connected with one another by these mundane sets of facts. It is sobering to think that there is nothing that we can do to avoid the specter of death before us. When we captivate ourselves through creativity, we are committing to the world an expression of that which is hidden within us, namely the death drive. It is here where the individual is given the foreknowledge of death in a way that it manifests in a form of communication that language cannot express.

Objects, and subjects become intertwined as the conscious, and unconscious mind proliferates the ideals of common man. It is in our very core that we postulate ideas regarding the experience of the dying process through our expression of cultural, and individual artefacts of life. The clues of life's truth continually unveil themselves to those who seek out the authentic nature of reality. We succumb to a form of reality that is an amalgamation of the subjective, and objective. It is through these intertwined conceptualizations that we find ourselves understanding life from a more nuanced point of view. Everything becomes colored with the knowledge that each experience in life is a foretaste of death.

In mythology, there is a theme of sacrifice, sometimes of the self for the greater good. This can be translated into the subconscious desire for self-annihilation through an internal rebirth of the individual. To explain more clearly, what I mean here is that there is a desire for the sacrifice of one's own self for the chance to live authentically in line with nature, and the very foundational aspects of the death drive. The death drive propels us forward intellectually into a struggle between the objectively true, and subjectively felt. I continually allude toward this idea because it is through death that we can experience life more authentically.

Authenticity, though admittedly a fabrication in and of itself, is a virtuous one, for it allows us to mold ourselves through intellectual honesty, and life experience. I say that it is a fabrication because, like all things revolving around ethics, morality, and the subject of individual autonomy there is a line drawn in the sand, so to speak, regarding all ways of choosing to live one's own life. Besides the primitive throwbacks of responding to our hormonal, and physical states, we experience (uniquely) the complex nature of the rational through the questioning of our very existence.

Purpose is elusive to some, because it is not as easily found in traditional or cultural ideals regarding meaning. For those who look at life from a logical, or rational, point of view, there is value in learning the basis of anatomical structures, as well as fundamental scientific laws. Following logic, we can add our own personal set of ideals, and commit a form of meaning to the mundane forces surrounding our lives. Doing these things allows us to fill the void where there is only emptiness due to the ever-looming truth of death.

Some traditional beliefs focus on a marriage of the symbolic with the communal to find some purpose to our lives. Others focus on individual salvation through some form of personal sacrifice. The rational mind is always in pursuit of some higher truth that cannot easily be gleamed from the likes of tradition alone. In this lonely philosophy of being there is no

easy access to resources to cure the anxiety of the massive void of non-being. Purpose must be created through individual effort.

Intellectually, we must be honest with ourselves in that we should focus on those facets of personality that distract us from our true potential. By reflecting on these aspects, we are making ourselves aware of the need to shed ourselves of unnecessary thought patterns, and ideas. By doing this, we are making way for a revolution of personal importance which will color every part of our lives. The act of working, inventing, or dreaming, will take on a different meaning considering this new awareness, as the individual can thereby maximize their self-autonomy through the conscious awareness of death.

If we make ourselves cognizant of death, we can more clearly live our lives in a way that is truly authentic. This authenticity comes to us by way of death awareness, and it is manifested as an intertwined aspect of thought that is ever present. Living in this manner will allow for there to be an extension of individual autonomy that is being actively expressed. This can be seen in light of individual rights, freedoms, and manifestations of the will in practice.

We can stimulate our intellectual awareness through the study of literature, inclusive of philosophy. By following a foundational process that allows for there to be a powerful inner state of self-awareness, the individual becomes free to ruminate on the more profound aspects of life. All things, as mentioned before, are connected to the death impulse. We are driven by the will to live, as well as to die. This is an extension of other dichotomies that are apparent in this world. What I mean by this is that the conscious, unconscious, acausal, and causal, are all intertwined by their differences, and this is inclusive of the will to live, and die.

Subjectivity allows for there to be a richer inner world of possibilities that extend from limitations found in the physical sphere. The more we realize that we are limited in our expression of the will, the closer we come to understanding the importance of the subjective in our lives.

By observing our own propensities for behavior, as well as analyzing our unconscious thoughts, we can open ourselves to those aspects of our personality which would otherwise be left shut away in our subconscious. The subconscious mind is teeming with the wild, and abstract, and this is inclusive of our deepest imaginings regarding death as the greatest mystery of all. Our level of awareness is impacted directly by our daily actions regardless of how mundane those actions may seem. Death awareness begins with an acceptance of the abstract turned into a palpable reality that all can observe.

Our behavior is a representation in the physical world of our subconscious thoughts regarding ideals, morality, and ethics. Some of these thoughts are ingrained in us from a very young age, while others are learned through interaction with others on a sociological level. The mind is continuously barraged by the contradictions found in cultural, and ethnic traditions which claw at us from afar. We are slowly brought to our knees, ideologically speaking, to amass some form of death denial which encompasses a great deal of modern cultures.

We can choose to separate ourselves from this death denial by observing the physical, and psychological processes involved in the dying process. The knowledge of the observable sciences allows us to intellectually become honest with ourselves, and furthermore it gives us a sense of rationality that is sobering, and mature. Pairing this knowledge with the self-interpretation of the unconscious mind gives the individual a sense of freedom that is profoundly accessed through intentional self-education.

The world around us is composed of the objective, as well as subjective experiences. This is because we are intimately connected with both the primitive, as well as the advanced nature of modern cognitive thought. As individuals, we have a right to seek out the very limits of the will through the manifestation of our experience in the dichotomous. The subjective, objective, rational, and irrational become equal players on the stage of life for us when we open ourselves to further possibilities.

Death is an abstraction in the sense that it represents symbolically those primitive impulses toward self-annihilation we all possess. It is also a physical reality because of very real processes that occur during the death of an individual. These two very different ideas are not fully separate from one another, and can be understood better through a cultivation of awareness that begins with self-honesty. It is through self-honesty that we can make real those concepts regarding the freedom of the will in the process of death acceptance.

By death acceptance, I mean that there is an internal mechanism within each person towards a profound understanding of mortality that is at least always present on a subconscious level. If we observe the way the world works, it is focused on technology, industry, and other advancements which would seem pointless if not stemming from some individual understanding of purpose. Work cannot be seen as something that is merely a requirement to etch out some form of dignified existence, but a parallel for the death experience through a manifestation of intellectual idealism.

There is a truth to the saying that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to this life. We are in a world that is full of accomplishments from all sides, especially in terms of advancements on a scientific level. Our ancient traditions are becoming less, and less relevant to progress as time goes by. We are in a post-modern society that needs to find some form of meaning in the paradoxically meaningless entanglements this world provides us with.

Our abstractions on the conceptualizations we have on death are not wholly counterproductive toward a more concrete understanding of mortality. These half-baked ideas often carry with them some grain of truth regarding the manifestation of death in our lives. When we find ourselves daydreaming, and looking for some romantic escape from the very average lives we often lead, we are in some way on to something that is more profound than at first glance is seen. Psychologically, we are tied to our

own conceptualizations of death, as well as those facts which are laid out before us through the objectively true.

Through despair, depression, and psychological anhedonia, there is a method by which we can understand these traits we possess through mental rumination on death. This method is found in the experiential rather than a specific discipline of thought. It requires nothing save for one to go through mental anguish of some kind to emerge with a knowledge of the self which is deconstructed. For there to be a true dissection of the self, these experiences can only be understood through the aspects of the individual which are often ignored.

The conceptualization of disconnecting the individual from the outside world through profound inner experiences is not a new one, but it certainly has a different meaning when applied to self-annihilation. The destruction of the learned, ingrained aspects of individuality assures for there to be an authenticity that simply cannot be feigned. This authenticity is a requirement for there to be a psychological rebirth of the individual in question.

Anhedonia, being the lack of ability to feel pleasure, can serve as a direct means by which the suffering individual can disconnect from the outside world. The subjective, then, becomes more pronounced due to the lack of stimulation from external distractions. Of course, this is a state of being that is embroiled in extreme suffering for the individual because there is a disconnect between the constructed self, and the greater objective physical realities presented to us. The more that we disconnect from the causal, the greater our perception of the acausal which sits just outside of our peripheral mental vision.

It is the combination of all those experiences which remove us mentally from the outside world, guiding us to a closer examination of the subjective. We can all experience these extremes in emotional (as well as psychological) states at any given time if we pay attention to our inner core of being. This depth of being is based on the concept that there is a

massively overarching shared illness which we all partake of in some way as members of the human race. The myth of the balanced individual is washed away by the conceptualization that lays bare our deficiencies.

The subconscious mind is powerful in that it forces us through dreams, dissociation, and symbolism to consider our own deaths. It is through the dreaming state that we become closer to the authenticity we seek in our conscious minds. Language is not considered here, save for symbols that are communicating eternal truths to the individual. The limitations of spoken word need not infringe upon the visual world of the subconscious mind.

Conscious thoughts allow for cohesion between the unconscious, and the objective world. We see endless examples of how the unconscious mind influences the physical world, and this is through art, architecture, and other technologies which were once dreams in themselves. There is a downplaying of the unconscious because it is not associated with the objective as much as the conscious mind is. Nonetheless, there is a connection between both aspects of the mind, and objective reality.

Objective views of the world show that visible reality is inherently mutually experienced, and this is documented through scientific truths. The subconscious, and acausal are likened to shadows, or silhouettes of what we experience in the objective world. Therefore, the subconscious is often discounted when relating what we know to be objective versus the unknown of the mind. The mind itself is a mystery which is only beginning to be understood; its potential not fully known.

When we dream, we think of things which are often fantastical in nature, but may have some basis in objective reality. Our nightmares of death, destruction, and personal loss of self-control are all present from some visceral fear of the unknown during times of conscious awareness. When most people are going about their daily business, the subconscious mind reflects deeply on the truth behind mortality. Whether we consciously think on death, or no, we are all discovering inherent truths regarding our

limited time on this planet. This can cause tremendous anxiety, and rightfully so, for there are few things regarding death that we can recognize as being truthful other than the established science. Death is like a puzzle that is missing pieces.

There is a rebirth of subjective purpose in life found through the abandonment of the self. The constructions, fabrications, and other machinations of life which have inevitably molded us into who we are become ultimately irrelevant in the search for death. Cultural, and sociological artefacts which are reverenced, and practiced, become useless tools for those who seek out the revelations of death. When we consider our mortality, there is no cultural idea that can save us from the reality that we must face on our own. Therefore, cultures are often harmful to the individual, especially considering the nature of death.

It may seem like a radical idea to loathe the idea of culture, but it is not an idea without merit. Look around you, and you will see the devastation brought on by culturally approved behaviors. We have deforestation, climate change, and battles that are fought against one another with risk to the entire planet. These very real existential threats have their basis in cultural, as well as sociological aspects of the human condition which are profoundly ingrained in our world.

Death awareness brings us closer to the understanding that there are no easy answers in the search for the truth. What is obvious is that we can only experience the fullness of the dying process alone, even with all the advancements in science regarding it. Dying is a lonesome experience, but we can gain important insights prior to the inevitable event of it occurring to us.

Life is a preparatory process that allows the individual to contemplate the profound truths of decay, and separation from the conscious mind. We are amid a great precipice of moral import which relates to the autonomy of the individual, and the needs of society at large. In my estimation, the individual is of the utmost importance, for the most important experiences

of life we can have are subjectively felt. Subjectivity then becomes the catalyst for an incredible internal revolution of being.

Returning to the concept of the primitive through reflection on instinct, it is important to remember that we must be willing to strip ourselves of unnecessary personality traits. It is through our journey toward authenticity that we can easily begin to see those aspects of ourselves which are like baggage for us. Perhaps there are characteristics in our daily interactions with others that we can notice about ourselves which we would change if we had seen it in ourselves before. It is never too late to search for the authentic in an inauthentic sociological scheme.

When we search for the authentic through introspection on our situation in life, we can then begin to start from the beginning of our newly found journey. It is in the clean slate of our consciousness that we commence our path toward true acceptance, and readiness for the dying process. This must be our goal, because it is through dying that we complete our unique self-made destiny in life. What I mean by this is that regardless of how death finds us, should we be at least somewhat prepared through intense introspection, we can achieve whatever nebulous form of peace we are searching for. By peace, I am referring to an unspoken subjective state that can only be reached by continual struggle throughout this life.

Many religions, and spiritual paths claim to have a way by which individuals can reach their true authentic selves, but none are based on objectivity exclusively. We must be honest with ourselves, and be ready to view death as a physical event which has scientific foundations.

Whatever may lie beyond death is mere speculation, and I cannot comment on that which cannot be known for certain. Nonetheless, there is a strong undercurrent found in ancient traditions of stripping the self of falsehoods, whatever that may mean. The goal of my philosophy is no different, in that through introspection there may be a possibility to advance oneself toward a more authentic mode of being. Another way that

we can reach authenticity of being is through getting in touch with the natural world around us. Separation from the masses for a self-prescribed amount of time can only serve to help one to find their self-made purpose.

Meditation is one way by which we can think deeply upon those aspects of ourselves that we would rather see disappear. This does not mean that we should align ourselves with any adjacent belief system whatsoever. By clearing the mind, and allowing ourselves to be separated from our chaotic experiences of the day (even if for a moment), we can then begin our task of searching for the subjectively authentic.

Introspection on the morbid side of life such as death, and the dying process can place us strategically in a beneficial place mentally. This is harder than it sounds, because it requires one to truly experience empathic emotions regarding those who are experiencing their own demise.

The subjective here becomes objective, in that we force ourselves by introspection to look at those in the outside world who are suffering every day. Our thoughts become comingled with the objective through forcing us to gather whatever internal resources we have to make reality our subjective obsessions.

It is through non-thought that we can become closer to our supposed eternal state; that of non-being. There is a great mystery to death in that it is not without questions that have been yet unanswered. This mystery can provide either a form of solace for us, or become a cause for extreme anxiety, and panic. It is questionable as to whether there is a choice in our emotional response to death, or no, but one thing is certain; we all must personally experience dying for ourselves.

Non-being is a concept that can only be understood in terms of the great mystery of eternity. We all share this allotment of non-experience through the physical processes of death. If we were to approach life from this perspective, we would realize that we are all the same in our fragility. This great humility found through the realization of our fragile nature manifests itself in how we embrace the brokenness of ourselves in others.

This is not an easy state of being to approach, because most of humanity is busy making much ado about nothing. This busybody aspect of life is one of the greatest tragedies in that it neglects the truth of death.

In our post-modern world, we are continuously battling the conception of the self with the construction of who we are by the various influences of socialization. By recognizing this internal fight, we can become further cognizant of our choice to shed ourselves of those aspects of being that do not serve us anymore. Of course, there are limits to what we can shed ourselves of, since we still must live in a society of tightly strung together definitions of what is acceptable behavior. Regardless of limitations, however, we can at least tap into our subconscious minds, and become aware of the death impulse surrounding us.

There is a strong undercurrent found within death awareness that guides individuals toward an authenticity that is as unique as each person is. In our simple interactions with others, should our minds be colored by the topic of death, we will be more cognizant of the importance of impressing upon others a benign attitude, if not something more positively profound. What I mean by this is that even the least important of interactions with another individual take on a new meaning when considering death awareness.

Societies at large are moving towards globalization on a scale that our ancestors could have hardly imagined. New ideas, modes of self-expression, and identities are being formed which cast a wide net upon many different cultures to varying degrees of turmoil (or success). A truly cosmopolitan influence is taking place in our cultures that showcases the emergence of individualism over collectivism. This change is something that can be witnessed through emerging technologies, inventions, and ideals which translate across language, customs, and other traditional barriers to cultural evolution.

In the end, we realize that death is a highly individualistic experience, as well as one that can be shared with others. When we experience the

death of a loved one, we are shedding a part of ourselves in preparation for a newness of being which develops silently within us. This shedding of various aspects of our being is profoundly felt, even if it cannot be experienced the same exact way from person to person.

Death is one representation for the profound change that can occur when an individual is willing to strip themselves of preconceived notions of who they truly are. This is something that is truly frightful to think about, but it is necessary for there to be any marked growth within the individual on a conscious level to occur. In the big picture of things, we are insignificant on so many different levels, but it is through this realization that we grow. All life on Earth develops, grows, and changes in ways that are profoundly felt throughout the world, even if those changes appear to be subtle in nature.

Humanity is at a critical stage of development, at both psychological, and technological levels. We are immersed in a world of instantaneous information whereby we can develop ourselves at the click of a button. Information, educational ideas, and news are at our disposal without much afterthought. For us to have experienced such a change in a relatively short period of time there is a tremendous conflict developing within the individual that cannot be ignored. This conflict is a psychological one in which there is so much information available that it is hard to parse through what is, and isn't important in one's own life.

There is an accountability that comes with knowledge, and this is certainly something that must be taken into consideration when confronting ourselves with the knowledge of death. I argue that it is important to learn the physiological, and scientific aspects of death for there to be a more nuanced understanding of where we stand as human beings in this world. The more that we search for a concrete understanding of our mortality, the clearer we can see things in terms of our own deaths. We may never be able to (at least in our lifetimes) know what lies after the physical corruption of the body, and we must come to terms with this.

No amount of faith can save us from the ultimate redemption of the self, which is of utter annihilation. It is in annihilation that we dissolve ourselves from the falsehoods which seek to nullify those aspects of life which are noble in nature.

Chapter Two

Suicide as a Representational Concept of Self-Annihilation.

Suicide, as an act, as well as a concept, is intertwined with the instinctual aspects of human existence. It is through the moments of utter despair when we come across the essence of what makes us closer to authenticity. The universe is a cold place where chaos seems to be the order of the day; so, it is with our lives. In the ultimate judgment of all things, we can clearly see that our destiny is to disintegrate into nothingness from our cold existence at the end of our lives. I cannot begin to speculate what takes place after this disintegration, because it is not something that can be known objectively.

The suicidal impulse is one in which there is a profound depth of sorrow, loss, and personal manifestations of emptiness. It is an impulse not to be taken lightly, and runs in tandem with the primitive desire towards self-destruction. As with all my work, I would like to make clear that there is **no** encouragement here for anyone to take their own life. These concepts are *abstract* in nature, inclusive of suicide as a manifestation of internal modes of desire. Suicide is an act of the Will, and it should be taken as a sacred concept away from the shallow idealism that masquerades itself as humanitarianism. Though it should not be encouraged, it must be respected as a human right along with a myriad of other rights alongside it.

Self-annihilation, as previously mentioned, is not a concept that is strictly physical in nature. This is a mental conceptualization that involves a rebirth of the clean slate of the individual's mind. There is no limitation of definitions here because self-annihilation is not limited to the physical destruction of the body alone. Our thoughts regarding suicide are limited in that we often refer to it as an act alone, rather than an ideological revolution occurring within the subconscious.

The self, being a construct, is crucial in dissecting the minutiae of suicidal ideation. It is through the death impulse that we find ourselves fighting with the core conceptualizations of internal struggle. The closer we come to self-knowledge, the clearer we will see that death is the utmost important of all experiences. We do not know how we will react to our own study of death until we learn from our self-education sufficiently. I cannot determine what that sufficient level is for anyone else other than myself because this is a subjective experience.

What we learn is based on the manifestation of ideals, thoughts, rational concepts, and shared experiences. The combination of all these things propels us further toward self-discovery in a way that cannot be understated. To further clarify, I mean that our sociological position in the world, as well as our psychological makeup, and education all point toward a specific destination of ideas. Our destination brings us to death, because it is the ultimate of sanctifying experiences that calls forth to us as the most authentic version of ourselves.

Each experience in life, now colored by death gnosis, is made anew with the intent toward making the most of every moment. Connections with others become, in this light, a foundational aspect of personality which relates to self-introspection, and mutual respect. Death is not seen here as a negative force for the individual because it also relates to appreciation for living through times of peace, as well as surviving even the most objectively evil of situations in this life. As with everything, there must be a foundation of strength which balances the knowledge that the individual has with the truth of eventual death.

As human beings we seek out idealism through subjective knowledge of the world around us. We wish to make reality those thoughts in our minds which are idyllic in nature. This is a natural response to the outside world because there is a foundational aspect of self-representation happening here. Self-annihilation, therefore, is at once a recognition of the failure to translate internal ideals into an objective reality, as well as the manifestation of those ideals in a broken world.

The symbolic is necessary to understand the subtle nuances of why someone might wish to commit suicide. Of course, we must also look at psychological morbidities which objectively exist so that we may have a more thoroughly complete idea of the reasoning behind it. We must not overlook all different possibilities, inclusive of sociological, and other frameworks regarding suicide. This is where we build a foundation of understanding that goes beyond simple judgments made for or against it.

When we consider the symbolism behind suicide, we think of visualizing imagery relating to despair, bleakness, and hopelessness. These things can manifest in several ways depending on the individual because all symbolism in this context is subjective in nature. The despair that someone must feel to take their own lives must be tremendously profound, and beyond mere comprehension from a critical point of view. As I have said before many times, there are some experiences that are beyond the confines of language.

Bleakness comes from a lack of hope in the future, or even consolation in the present (or past). This is an aspect of the individual that comes with a strong emotional outburst of energy that is ultimately self-destructive. It is in the chaos of this concept that we can only imagine what torments the individual must go through when facing this experience. Hopelessness, in tandem with bleakness represents an absence of emotional warmth, or communion with others. There is a perpetual feeling of missing some form of completeness that will never come to the individual, therefore bringing them to a state of complete unrest.

Psychological diagnoses allow us to pinpoint certain behaviors, thoughts, or ideas in individuals in such a way that there is a concrete scientific theory behind these conceptualizations. Just like there is an important reason to study gross anatomy if only to understand how the body works (and subsequently, how it dies), it is important to know the objective reasoning behind certain maladaptive emotions, or moods. We must not, however, mistake our rationality for a justification of passing

judgment upon others. We ourselves must be willing to be continually self-educated concerning these matters.

Self-annihilation is representational of the most primitive conscious states of humanity. We are continuously struggling between the will to live, and die. Ancient cave paintings tell a tale of mankind struggling to sustain itself with the corpses of various animals or in the very moment of the hunt. Perhaps it is with the violence we inflict on the outside world, which our baser instinct holds in common with other animals, that we realize we are ultimately slowly digging our own graves.

The ultimate reality here is that there is a foundational break between the will to live, and the impulse to die. This does not mean that there is no connection between the two, it is just that both forms of desire are extremely powerful. We have barely touched the surface of the profundity surrounding suicide because of all the taboos that surround its manifestation in the world around us. Everything we experience is colored by the grim reality of our eventual deaths.

Dying can be likened to the experience of being born in that we only experience it once. Our primitive impulse toward death is ironically tied in with the intense desire for immortality. All our creative works inclusive of painting, sculpture, film, and music bring us closer to the reality of the enormity of the eternal. It is through this enormity of presence that we must face the ultimate truth; that of eventual dissipation through death.

If we were to strip ourselves of outside influences inclusive of sociological, psychological, and developmental structures of thought we would be left with the understanding that death is the ultimate experience. This does not imply that there is no merit to the experiences that we have whilst we are alive. What I mean by this is that there is a powerful understanding to be found through visualizing the dying experience in a personal way.

By meditating upon how we might eventually die, we become equipped with the knowledge of how each sunset represents a new

beginning of life. This is the great mystery of life; how we can transform ourselves through introspection despite the limitations of life.

The desire to survive is outweighed at times by the experience of pain which can be either physical, or mental. This is not so easily explained, because there can be a variety of motives for the battle to live another day. Everything that is chosen is done through a subjective lens, because though we have objectively similar experiences, we go through these experiences on a highly individualistic level. To clarify, I mean that all possible experience is filtered through a subjective lens.

There comes a point where the suffering of an individual is too much, however, and this can trigger the impulsion toward death. At what point is the pain considered too much to handle? This is something that can only be answered at an individual level. We can observe in others varying degrees of tolerance toward suffering, and this is seen through the natural impulse towards either constancy or resignation in death. This is the most profound aspect of the delicate balance on a psychological level that the will has to offer.

Even though we are amid incredible suffering (either mental, physical, objective, or subjective), we still can choose to thrive. This thriving is something that is found to a degree that cannot be measured by traditional means, and must be experienced on an individual level. When we choose to cultivate hope amid the worst of tragedies, we are experiencing a death, and a rebirth, of the very foundational conception of self. This shakes our very understanding of being to the core, as it should. It is, after all, an incredibly profound experience that perhaps can find expression through the abstractions of music, or art.

Returning to the very basis of this argument, I posit that whether a person chooses to live, or die, they are expressing a deepness of being which is overshadowed by the strength of a fiery will. This is a veritable truth that can be deduced by a reasoning that has a basis in the liberation of the individual over any intrusive cultural environment. The self, as defined

by the individual, is malleable, and must be the sole property of that person in question. If there is any intrusion on this, then there is a crime being committed against the individual that must be fought against vigorously.

Anguish is the source of our fascination with death, even if it is the last thing on our minds normally. We are sometimes preoccupied with the possibility of our own eventual suffering, but this is a very rare occurrence for the average person. There is an urgent sense of self-preservation through possibilities that are thrown against us because we do not wish to believe that we too could also suffer. This is, of course, an illusion, and a persistent one on behalf of the individual and the interaction with the primitive survival instinct. A fragility of being exists when the individual does not recognize their mortality, but this is something that is more common than is readily admitted.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that there is, despite a heavy reliance on self-illusory thought, a profound understanding of our own mortality on a fundamental level. This understanding goes deeper than mere occasional thoughts toward death, but is something that colors all life. Even in our attempts to bring beauty into the world through our machinations has failed us in the long run. For every painted lip, nicely dressed gentleman, or fascinating new fad that strings itself along our fragile sensibilities there is service toward the power that death brings to us.

In my estimation, there is not only power in the acknowledgment that death as a phenomenon has over humanity, but a hidden source of strength to be found that cannot be described with words. All our illusions are immediately shattered when we see that the world around us is hardly congruent with our vision of traditional labeling. We think we see the truth when we are given morsels of knowledge through traditional indoctrination, or public education, but we only see a two-dimensional shape of reality.

The more we enter the world around us, and interact with others, the *less* sense the world makes. Every individual has a nuanced connection with

one another that is unmistakably unique in nature. This connection is made stronger through continual exposure to elements of diversity in culture, as well as tradition. By exposing ourselves to the outside world we become naked intellectually.

To be at peace with death means to allow oneself to unravel the conceptualizations created from birth for us. This is a concept that is not far removed from what we think about when we consider death for ourselves, because we all lose a sense of self when we reach the end of our lives. According to Dr. Carl Jung, in *The Integration of Personality*, "the hypothesis of the collective unconscious belongs to the class of ideas that people at first find strange, but soon come to possess and use as familiar conceptions. This has been the case with the general notion of the unconscious."

Dr. Jung here recognizes that it is always at first strange when individuals are forced to confront the conceptualizations of the unconscious, and I would take things a step further by saying that we also find the idea of death to be extremely strange at first glance. Indeed, the world, and its concepts, appear to be outlandish in general to us who are merely indoctrinated from birth to understand the world from a two-dimensional experience.

We are woefully unprepared for the occurrence of death, and this is evidenced by the manifestation of grief, sorrow, and loss. Whenever we face the death of another individual close to us, we react instinctively, and variably from other people. Our ideals, thoughts, and subconscious notions of being become fundamentally challenged considering the death process. This is one concept that I have pointed out as being particularly tragic in my previous works. The human race is destined to continuously fight against primitivism with progressivism. This is a battle that has always existed, and will continue to exist for as long as there is death in the world.

At the other end of the spectrum, death is transformative in that it is a manifestation of varied emotional, and physical states that is underpinned

by the universal human experience. When we experience loss, we are tapping into the fundamental core of humanity. This is something that is understood on a level that is almost wholly symbolic, even though there is a direct physical experience that coincides with it.

Chapter Three

How the Annihilation of the Self is a Symbol of Renewal.

"If the moral order is one and unchanging, man does change in relation to it, and moral standards are relative to the stage of his growth." – Edward Howard Griggs, *The Soul of Democracy: The Philosophy of the World War in Relation to Human Liberty*.

Self-annihilation is the foundation for the ending of a symbolic form of one's own past, and a re-creation of a new form of being. This much has been established as part, and parcel of my philosophy. To further elaborate, what I mean is that there are many layers to self-annihilation, and they do not all imply a literal destruction of any individual. It is through the incredibly profound experiences of pain, suffering, and inner turmoil that we find ourselves at the precipice of irrevocable change. This change can be on a physical level, but it is mainly concentrated in the mental. All decisions, thoughts, ideas, and passing fancies become transformed by the specter of self-annihilation.

To find oneself in the position of self-annihilation, one is simply complying with the moral disorder found in the chaos of existence. Edward Howard Griggs found himself amid a great societal upheaval as a writer living through the First World War, and his observations on the question of moral certainty were based on a sincere desire for inherent purpose in a rudderless world.

Each day that we rise to face a new day is the beginning of our utter annihilation in the face of eternity. This is not readily experienced, because our conception of time is (perhaps mercifully) distorted by our concept of living day by day. We rarely find ourselves making succinct observations of our extreme limitedness of being with relation to time until it is often too late.

When we renew ourselves through the struggles that befall us, we are humbling ourselves before the awe-inspiring nature of how insignificant we

truly are. We are surrounded by causal actions, experiences, and ideology on a constant basis which influences us regardless of how disconnected we may see each of these things.

According to author Barbara Low in her work *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*, "what look like unexpected accidental happenings are not so in reality. The explanation is that so large a part of our psychic life remains and operates, in the Unconscious that we are perforce unaware of it: we see only end-results which thus appear detached, incongruous, causeless." Our connection to the unconscious mind is inherently part of our primitive nature, but this is often ignored in favor of feigning ignorance of it.

Each moment that we experience some form of anguish we become closer to the humble state of non-being. It is through the non-existent that we will eventually find ourselves contending with in the twilight of our lives. This realization brings us to the true essence of humanity; that of preparing for death by living each day as if it were our last.

Struggling keeps us reminded of those eternal truths of mortality in that it keeps us sober of mind. In the darkest hour of our sorrow, there is a triumph to be found in the realization of the importance of death as it manifests itself in our lives. This is not some form of morbidity that is the result of obsessed thinking, but it is a realistic way of countering our fear of death.

The mind foreshadows the dying process through the various stages of grief which become present in our lives as aspects of sorrow. This sorrowful nature is powerful in that it contains all those ideas, thoughts, and conceptualizations of non-being which play out in our heads as glimpses of reality before us. We do not have a full understanding of consciousness, nor do we possess concrete truths beyond what we can physically know.

Empathy towards the struggles of others allows us to step outside of our comfort zones, and take up the reins of internal profundity. The

connection we share with others is based on being in touch with the perception of the self at the same time. The two concepts of connection, and perception are intertwined due to the nature of how we process our interactions with the outside world in our minds. We do not know just how profound these connections are, but we do know that we need them even if it is only to provide rest for our inner sense of being.

When we observe suffering that is outside of ourselves, we learn about how we might react to any given situation in which we have lost control. There is an incredible source of power behind the experience of suffering itself, and this is because it forces us to lose our center of being as if we were truly dying. We do experience the dying process in our lives whenever challenges befall us, and we must recognize it as being essential to the core of our connection to the outside world.

The strengths that we cultivate within ourselves become magnified when we connect with others in a meaningful way. This can include helping someone directly, or mitigating the suffering of another through some form of contact. For us to contact another, we must be willing to expose ourselves from the inside out. This form of self-exposure is incredibly deep because it invites us to take our place in the world as we have entered it; naked, and alone (even in company).

Solitude is something we must contend with at some point, for it is our destiny to die alone even if we are surrounded by loved ones. The process of dying is solitary, and as part of this solitude we become closer to our true nature as human beings. When we become exposed to dying well before our time has come, we learn the nature of the emptiness that we must eventually embrace. This brings us back to the argument that empathy opens possibilities of realization, ever beckoning us toward the profound, and little understood aspects of life. Sheltered though we are, we come eye to eye with the truth as we connect with others.

Death is not merely a device by which we observe our humble natures, but it is a manifestation of the truth. It is through death that we

reveal to ourselves what we have always secretly known; that of our finite natures eventually reconciling with the very spaces of non-being we seek to avoid. It is in those spaces where we find ourselves reaching toward oblivion, and the liminal aspects of what lies between life, and death. We cannot perceive the essence of the liminal because it is neither consciously perceived, nor is it available for us to educate ourselves on.

The liminal is the link between the conscious, and the unconscious. Whenever there is a space of non-thought, we can observe ourselves dissociating without understanding what the content of that detachment is. This is the aspect of life which mirrors death in a very subjective manner, and can only be known through conceptualization in a fragmented way. We must attempt, however, to understand even if it is from a subjective way the nature of those liminal spaces around us.

What we know of the truth is based on what we know about death. Our experience of this life is filled with uncertainties, suffering, and occasional happiness. It is in between these experiences that we can choose to guard ourselves against self-deceit. What we know about this life will soon enough translate into the passing of our very concept of being into nothingness. This is a sobering thought, but it is one that is necessary for the individual that would be mindful of death.

In the end stages of life, we learn about how our very essence of being dissolves into the great void of non-being. All our accomplishments, tasks attended to, and goals suddenly become secondary in terms of the great vastness that lies ahead for us in death. This knowledge alone should offer the individual two paths whereby it is possible to take, and continue for the remainder of this life. The first path is that of utter despair, which is not an easy path, but one in which the perception of the self is completely unraveled. The second path is that of stoic peace, whereby there is a choice made to create meaning in a world that has lost its anchor.

The fascination with death does not mean one is beset by morbid proclivities. It simply means that one is connected vitally to the knowledge

that death brings to us as human beings. This knowledge brings us closer to the essence of what it means to be alive. The great philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, in his collected essays, states that "for the highest, most varied, and lasting pleasures are those of the mind, however much our youth may deceive us on this point; and the pleasures of the mind turn chiefly on the powers of the mind." It is through the mind, therefore, that we can see beyond the superficial understandings of life, and seek out the truth of the essence of humanity.

Our dependence on the outside world for knowledge severely limits us from being able to make healthy contact with our subjective inner being. We can, for example, know how death occurs on a biological level, but we still have so much we can learn about the process of dying on a mental level. If we were to take our knowledge of death a step further, and apply it to our subjective inner lives, we would then be able to define for ourselves the purpose of life in a more concrete way. We may never possess the full knowledge of this purpose other than what we discover through the subjective, but this is something that we must simply accept.

Death teaches us the truth about ourselves in a way that allows us to see that the world around us exists in many shades of grey. There is no black, and white. Everything around us, in terms of culture, history, community, and ideology, are all amalgamations of what is manifested in the mind of man. Once we lay hold of, and seize that knowledge which is often at odds with most of humanity, we become powerful in our humbled state.

It is here where there is a rebirth of the self through the annihilation of previous knowledge, essences, and modes of being of the individual. By becoming honest with what we do know, and holding conversations with others regarding subject matter that is unpleasant, we can start anew for ourselves in a newly forged path. This path brings us to the authenticity that we seek through this self-honesty, and allows us to master the limitations we have through humility.

The symbolic teaches us how to react in a way that allows us to prepare for death in a dignified way, should we follow our instincts. Schopenhauer, on the subject of this life, makes it clear that "the only thing that stands in our power to achieve, is to make the most advantageous use possible of the personal qualities we possess, and accordingly to follow such pursuits only as will call them into play, to strive after the kind of perfection of which they admit and to avoid every other; consequently, to choose the position, occupation and manner of life which are most suitable for their development." We can seek out the truth of our will, being, and essence through the development of the self in an individual manner.

Symbolism is a conceptualization of ideas in an abstract manner that works in tandem with language to assist us in determining the purpose behind events as they happen. This life teaches us to become resilient through our sufferings, but often fails to include the reasons why we should continue living despite our pains. This is something that cannot be taught, unfortunately, and must be deciphered by the individual in question. There are some ethical, and moral universalities that exist because they favor the rights of the individual, but there are no universal truths surrounding purpose itself.

As stated before, there is a renewal of the self to be found in the utilization of the symbolic in one's own life. Self-annihilation occurs when there is a stoic understanding that we must accept the truth of what we discover about ourselves, and make the conscious choice to carry on in a renewed way. Suicide, then, becomes symbolic of this change, even if it is not literally experienced or chosen by the individual. It is through the suicidal aspect of thought which can bring forth a great deal of inner beauty from the profundity of tears shed in the name of experiencing this life. The taboo becomes one with the individual here, in that culture, and its markings, become useless artefacts destined for being discarded in favor of an authenticity of being. It is here in this authentic path that the individual can bring forth their scars, their inner torment, and forge a new foundation of self-creation.

Chapter Four

An Examination of Death as a Catalyst for Change.

Death forces us to abandon pre-conceived notions of being. It is through the dying process, or at least through the observation of it, that the individual becomes intimate with the nature of dissolution. In dissolution, we are made humble through the incredible force of nature to show us our weaknesses. The weaknesses that are exposed are also our wounds which do not close in time.

Nothing can adequately prepare us for death, but we must continue attempting to learn more about it if we are to attain some sort of peace with the knowledge gained from it. This peace is found through an individual sort of journey which cannot be replicated, or forced upon anyone.

When we observe the objective world around us, we still process things from a subjective point of view. Does this mean that we cannot know the world around us? In my estimation, we can (to a degree) know the contents of this world, at least through shared universal experiences, and scientific information presented to us. The dying experience, even if only known through the passing of others, provides a profundity of knowledge that cannot be adequately shared with words.

To reiterate the concepts that I am espousing, I believe that death is a gateway whereby we can humble ourselves through experiencing loss. This loss, or series of losses, showcases a tremendous outpouring of what it means to be fully human. To be fully human is to develop past those stages of immaturity that does not recognize the power death has over us. When we are at a state of maturity, there can be a rebuilding of foundations that have crumbled in the wake of personal changes. These changes awaken in us a sense of self-development which cannot be duplicated.

Acceptance, through emotional regulation, can benefit the individual on a psychological level. When we observe the body of someone we have

known at a funeral visitation, we are going actively through the grieving process. This process indicates a sense of loss not only towards the individual we no longer have in our lives but also towards those aspects of ourselves which do not serve us anymore.

Successfully passing through incredibly traumatic experiences relatively unscathed can be achieved through a stoic disposition toward life. This does not mean that we must live passively in the face of difficult situations. As previously mentioned, the concept of acceptance can bring with it a tremendous benefit that can be perceived through life experience. This is the case if we regulate ourselves in a way that keeps us focused intellectually upon the subtleties of the dying process.

The truth about acceptance is that it is not just a concept, but something that becomes fundamentally real to the individual in a way that is processed subjectively. Our subjective processing of objective realities allows us to function at a level that keeps us from self-destruction. There are exceptions to this concept however, in that traumatic experiences can cause a self-implosion of the sort that necessitates the building of new emotional foundations.

Regardless of where we find ourselves in this world, we will all have to contend with the passing down of the knowledge of death to us either from external situations (such as dying), or through a conscious decision to rid oneself of the ignorance surrounding it. There is a limited time for us to make these decisions on death awareness because our ultimate end will come sooner than later. Nonetheless, choosing actively to live in a state of awareness means keeping aware of mindfulness in our daily business. This is a sobering truth, but it is one that must be contended with in a very personal way either with ample time, or a matter of seconds prior to death. We cannot relive our youth, nor can we turn back the tide of change that happens when we grow old. These are facts which must be considered as well for there to be substantial growth within the individual.

Meditation upon death, and the destruction of the self through abstract rumination allows for a rebirth of the individual on a symbolic level. We can re-create a new self from the ashes of learned aspects of being. This is done specifically through a continual awareness of death intertwined with a desire to rebuild one's own life on a fundamental level. Of course, this is not easy to do because it is as profound as the decision to take one's own life. There is tremendous pain involved.

Abstractions exist on a level that is tied intrinsically with the unconscious, and can be deciphered only individually through the employment of subjective means. When we pay attention to our dreams, as well as inner thoughts, we are not relying on some form of nebulous spiritualism that does not ultimately serve us. What we are doing here is deciphering the truth of the objective through symbolic, personal means.

The rebirth of an individual, symbolically, means that there is something within the reconstructed self that makes an appearance in a vitally life changing way. From the ashes of the dead persona, there is a more authentic vision of life waiting to be freed. There is an infancy in the rebuilding of one's own self, just as there is an adolescent state, and a mature one. The rebuilding of the self ultimately mirrors the biological states of the natural life course.

By reconstructing the self, I am referring to a renewed foundational aspect of being that is initiated by the individual by choice. There can be no coercion involved in this change of being because it is as personal as the choice to commit suicide. The will, being limited to certain restrictions in this world, presents itself as a manifestation of the individual in action. By taking hold of one's own life, and focusing on the power of the individual will, there can begin a flowering of abundance which comes from self-destruction. This self-destruction is not a negative experience, but it does negate the prior conceptualizations that the individual has of their own life. It is as if one has already decided to end their life, even though they are beginning a new one through foundation building.

Changes on a fundamental level involve physiology, psychology, and a fixation on a mental continuum of thought dealing with the macabre. We must be aware of the physical changes happening to us as we age. Similarly, we must also become familiar with our own sense of mental awareness as we mature. To be fixated on the death principle means that each action taken in life is not experienced for granted.

The physiology of death includes those processes which overcome us as we ourselves slip into that unknown abyss of non-being. We lose consciousness, and enter an abyss that cannot be described by the living. Before we eventually must experience these things, we can imagine what it must be like to die. Studying anatomy, as well as other biological disciplines such as microbiology can provide an insight into those physical processes which will eventually be subjectively experienced.

Psychologically, we are united with the conceptualization we have of death on a fundamental level beginning from the core ideals of the mind. Everything that we do is colored in some way by the specter of death. From the most mundane daily actions such as showering, making breakfast, or paying bills, everything is tied in with the death principle.

The mental continuum of thought I am speaking about is specifically geared toward a fuller understanding of death. With a powerful foundation of scientific inquiry, there is a simultaneous psychological understanding that develops which can assist in calming the mind. This is not an easy process because it involves a conscious effort toward self-education that must be seen in the light of self-inquiry.

Introspection is one aspect of the human experience that is difficult to achieve without succumbing to outside influences. It is with the fixation on death that we begin to understand interconnected processes which are fundamentally human. The humanity of everything is based on acceptance of the dying process, as well as confronting grief. Sometimes grief comes to us in ways that we least expect, and we must learn to stand still to reflect on when this happens.

The death of others teaches us to be resilient within ourselves, even if it means to strengthen one's own resolve to enter that vast abyss of night known as non-existence. This is where the power in death is manifest as an observable truth. Resiliency works in more than one way; either manifesting as a life affirming experience, or prolonging the deepest aching despair of grief in our hearts.

Resilience begins with acceptance of the uncontrollable nature of reality, and our place within it. There are personal choices to be made regarding life, however, on the peripheral there remains the fact that resiliency itself is a construct of the will. This is another reminder that we are enslaved in some way to our desires regardless of the outcome.

To find strength within oneself is to apply those ideals of death awareness toward our conscious understanding of daily life. In our interactions with other, we should be careful to insert in our conscious awareness the fact that each one of us is going to die. It is through non-existence that we are made extremely humble by our situation, regardless of station in life.

By non-existence I am not implying anything other than what we can know biologically about the dying process. Perhaps biology, though a science, is part of a more profound understanding of human nature that is almost ethereal in aspect. We can have intense experiences when studying scientific disciplines though this is not something that is emphasized in academia. What I mean by this is that there is a deep setting in clinical education that calls for a psychological examination of the self from an emotional, subjective standpoint.

When we come together with others in a social setting with the undertone of loss as the main theme, we are communing with others on a level that illustrates to us the profundity of non-being. This communing is indicative that although we die alone, we are interconnected with others on a fundamental level. Within the interconnectedness that exists here there is a powerful lesson to be learned; that of the need to commune with others.

Death is not negative in the sense that it also manifests itself as a psychological, and primitive extension of the psyche. When we are in touch with ourselves on an intimate level, we are aware of the sensuality of death, and its relevance in daily life. Death is the ultimate lover, in the sense that there is a final embrace for us all even after a lifetime of experiences. The dying process can be seen as poetic in a sense because that is the element of being human that is present in causal events.

The psychological aspect of death informs us of how we can better live through the often-inconsolable aspects of our lives. Grief is a powerful tool that is available for us to utilize if we can. There is a positive and negative aspect to grief in the sense that it can ultimately overpower us emotionally. If we are fortunate to experience grief in a way that is not uncontrollable, we can use it to our benefit by allowing it to shape us psychologically.

Our primitive nature, on a foundational level, shows itself to be manifested in objective reality through our behavior in this world. Our interactions with others, when seen through the lens of grief, can be profoundly deep. This depth of emotion expresses itself in subtle ways because it is available to us in a way that is often nonverbal in its manifestation.

Behavioral adjustments toward death as a reality allow for the individual to heal in a balanced way. There must be a grounded sense of being which can look at events that occur from a logical angle. Emotions are extremely important, but logic and reason must prevail for there to be a blossoming forth of psychological maturity.

We must have a more nuanced understanding of the dying process for there to be a balance found within the constructs of the self. When we are ready, we will shed ourselves of these constructs to salvage some form of authenticity of being. This authenticity is found beyond the appropriations we have taken upon ourselves in the shallow depths of our personas.

There are many ways that we can become familiar with death, even if we do not experience it directly. You can observe a loved one passing away, or learn of a distant friend that somehow slipped out of your life. Perhaps it is the loss of a relationship that causes deathlike grief in your experiences. There are a multitude of ways that grief can touch us, and this is so because we all experience the objective in a subjective way. Experiencing life in this manner causes the illusion of difference from others through unique observations on occurrences surrounding us.

Our familiarity with the dying process matures us in a way that can be seen objectively through nuanced modes of thinking, and the natural processes of changing ideologies. Some of us let go of traditional ideologies such as organized religion, while others cling onto a personal meaning in life. Still others organize their thoughts around logic, reason, and science as the focal point for creating meaning from the ashes of a loss. All these instances are valid, in that they are expressions of those spaces in life which appear grey to us.

As I have mentioned before in my other works, I am stressing here the importance of having a physical, and scientific understanding of death through self-education. This includes the study of anatomy, physiology, and pathology in a dedicated way. My reasoning here is that the more we are aware of the physical processes involving death, and its causes, the more we will be prepared for the psychological trauma involving our own deaths.

Self-education also allows for there to be a widening of one's own internal vision of the world, augmenting our understanding of the objective through concrete universal knowledge. The nature of death is suitable for us to understand, even if it is in a limited biological way. We must be willing to create foundations of new ways of looking at the world around us. Even if one is to be mentally dead to one's old self, there must be a new foundation created based on personal meaning. This personal meaning is implicit in the individual that has survived the effects of grief.

The truth of the matter is that we are biological creatures with minds that wish to extend our existence beyond what is reasonable within the boundaries of nature. If we accept death as part of life, we are resigning ourselves to the truth of who we really represent as human beings. This truth, represented through objective biological facts, allows us to manifest a resilience within ourselves. As mentioned before, this resilience can either be shown forth as self-destructive, or life-affirming. The situations that lead up to either choice are found within the depths of the will which manifests itself as desire.

Our minds are, in a way of speaking, subject to sociological, psychological, and environmental influences beyond our immediate control. This is something that must be recognized before attempting to build any sort of mental foundation of being. We can only separate ourselves so much from the influence of the outside world. The remembrance of death allows for there to be a more sincere look into why we behave the way we do.

We can learn to re-create our minds through a new conceptualization of the self that is based on the understanding that all that exists is a construct. What I mean by this is that all sociological manifestations, as well as cultural ones, are led by constructs which must be conformed to (at least to a degree). We can liberate ourselves to a certain degree, but we must always be mindful of the limitations of our wills.

Returning to the concept of self-education, it is necessary for individual growth to allow oneself to dissect the essence of what it means to be human in a philosophical manner. The construct of the self lies beyond a mere objective view of the world, but is uniquely tinged with subjectivity. As this is the case, we must conform our wills to focus on rebuilding a conceptualization of being that is realistic for us to live with. By doing this we are giving ourselves permission to grow from the depths of our own personal tragedies. It is from these tragedies that we can blossom forth as new individuals with a renewed sense of self.

It is ultimately the will of the individual that manifests itself in the impulse to live, as well as to die. This force of the will is powerful, yet it is limited, as I have indicated in prior works of mine. There is strength to be found within both impulses, as this is a very human representation of the many dichotomies that exist in this world on an objective, and figurative scale. Just as there is night, and day, and there is wellness, and sickness, there is also the desire to live, and die. These impulses flow naturally from each one of us in a way that is wholly organic, and unique in nature.

Even *within* the realm of psychology, it is taboo to admit suicidal, or morbid impulses for fear of being institutionalized. This is something that is very real, especially for those who have a history of mental illness. Even for those who do not have such a history, to even slightly admit that one has felt such things is incredibly frowned upon. This is understandable to a certain degree, as it is, in the popular estimation, morally necessary to prevent self-harm. Nonetheless, it is arguable that it is a fundamental human right that one must at times entertain such thoughts without fear of reprisal.

It is popular in society to disapprove of ideas concerning death unless it is a mere passing mention to be forgotten quickly. What I mean by this is that death is seen as a cold fact to be shelved away from conscious awareness. We all readily admit that death is a reality, but we do not pierce into that reality as often as we should. This is unfortunate, because, as I have indicated before, it is through the awareness of the dying process that we become truly authentic.

The will is a powerful manifestation of an inner strength that becomes part, and parcel of the individual in time. The death impulse runs alongside the will because it is through individual choices made that one decides to live, or die. When we are shed of all that we have in this world on a material level, we then only have our will to call our own. Of course, ownership of any ideal such as the will implies knowledge of the world that we couldn't possibly have full access to. This leads us to realize that nothingness is all that remains in the end.

The changes we go through daily reflect how death touches us on a fundamental level. We do not always possess an awareness of how it touches us, but it is an aspect of life that is always present with us, nonetheless. From the most basic interactions with others, to the creation of a piece of art, awareness of death colors all of life.

Growth is possible through the recognition of the death impulse, and will occur organically from this realization. To clarify, I mean that once we recognize that to die is a very real desire held profoundly within the self, we can appreciate the nature of life even more. We all possess a certain morbidity within ourselves, but this is something that is rarely looked at with anything but denial or consternation.

The struggle to survive, inclusive of the will, is what guides us as individuals toward a re-creation of the construct of the self. There is the death impulse present in the re-creation of the individual because one must die symbolically for there to be a blank slate, as it were, to work with. All things exist as a dichotomy of another state of being when it comes to the mind, because there are foundations that can crumble when grief settles in our bones.

Despair is but one emotion that can be felt when one decides to completely change the essence of self-perception. This is a natural expression, because we are mourning what we once thought we were on a fundamental level. We become unfamiliar with our past selves in a sense because everything continues to exist in a hazy way that doesn't lend itself to clear memories.

On a fundamental level, we have died when we choose to change our lives through symbolic death. Those who choose to perceive themselves as a construct have given themselves the chance to grow through self-destruction on a mental level. This is something that is extremely powerful to realize, because we are dissecting the very essence of what it means to be truly human. In the deepest level of psychic perception, there is an unconscious stream of death awareness which pervades all our lives.

In the process of dying, we become changed in a way that is more profound than any other time frame in our life. This is because we are forced into a situation where we can no longer lay claim to any sort of immortality, nor can we shuffle away the truth of the matter. The profundity of eternity is found through the resignation toward death that the individual goes through.

On a mental level, when we are passing from this world into non-being, there is a recognition of all our prior experiences in a short period of time. This is a therapeutic, as well as a traumatic experience because it forces us to investigate those uncomfortable spaces that we have once inhabited in time. There are, of course, positive experiences that we might recall but these are overshadowed by those moments of sorrow, and pain we have either experienced or inflicted. Our very nature is brought closer to home through death because we are face to face with not only annihilation, but self-aggrievement, and (at times) regret.

Time is a concept that works in tandem with cellular senescence in that we are cognizant of our own mortality through the aging process. Each day that passes we grow older, and more subtly aware of how time becomes our enemy. There is a constant battle internally with all these opposing forces of existence because we are inherently fragile creatures. In our fragility we awaken to a nightmare that only has an end in the final closure of our eyes.

Everyone eventually experiences death, but there is a powerful benefit to be gained from the contemplation of it throughout the duration of our lives. This benefit is based on the ideal that it is possible to make not only the most of each experience, but to gather an internal wisdom from touching the face of death on a figurative level. As we communicate our desires toward the unknown before us, we become newly born into a mindset which is liberated from prior social engagements. Society no longer has such a grasp upon the individual that recognizes death as the ultimate equalizer, for there are no other experiences that are quite the same as dying.

Witnessing the death of another or the sight of a dead body can psychologically influence an individual to accept those things which are beyond our control. Therefore, it is important to commemorate those who were close to us. Most of what we conceive of grieving has to do with our own acceptance of death as a reality in our lives. The dead person has no use for funeral rites whatsoever.

The act of the funeral itself can, in a very real way, allow for there to be a sense of closure not just regarding the death of another but our own deaths as well. This is even more so true when we spend time observing the deceased in a ritualized setting. We do not have to associate religious, or spiritual beliefs with this ritual setting, but we do need to convey to our subconscious a sense of ending, and new beginnings.

Ceremonial traditions have value in that they help us to connect with the subjective experiences of the primitive mind. We have formalized the death rite as a normal part of the grieving process, but in a compartmentalized way. By doing this we are stifling ourselves from truly being able to heal unless we look beyond the mere trappings of the funeral. There is a period of healing which can take place after the experience of the funeral which is entirely subjective in nature.

Within a short time, there will be a reconstruction of the individual in a way that is involuntary. What I mean by this is that the self, being arbitrary, and a construct, becomes set to the wayside by means of the subjective. We experience our own unique forms of grief which are continuously affecting us in a unique way compared to others.

Grief is a lonely experience in a sense because it mirrors the dying process of being alone. This is a profound assertion because of the claim that all we eventually experience becomes solitary in nature. Though we are social creatures, in the end we are alone with our experiences. We must sculpt for ourselves a future that is based on the realization that all we share, have, and do, shall become nothing. This is a dark realization, but one that is filled with the light of self-awareness.

Our rites, and rituals regarding death can be seen as pathways into the mind of the collective whole. Throughout history, there is a strong connection that is unbroken between generations regarding the experience of mourning. Mourning allows for there to be an intimate connection between the individual, and the eternal. To clarify, what I mean by eternal relates to those aspects of post-dying disintegration whereby we no longer experience consciousness.

It is through the conceptualization of the eternal that we can understand our place in this world. There is no certain way for us to know the truth about life unless we have a fundamental understanding of death. A balance of scientific knowledge, along with a general emotional maturity can bring about a deep change within the individual.

The collective whole, in reference to the individual, is a powerful concept. We all experience dying, and the decay of those who have gone before us by the ravages of time. We can relate to others in the sense that they too have gone through some form of grief at some point. This is where the similarities disappear, however, because grief is, as previously mentioned, highly individualistic. We may look upon the deceased in a way that is either fitting of closure in a positive manner, or as a traumatic experience. Depending on how we view death, our response to such an event will be reflective of that.

The collective whole is a manifestation of the common interests, fears, and desires of the general population. It is a persuasive, powerful force of being which worms through our veins, and into our lives succinctly. There is an undertone here of despair, because as a collective, we are doomed to repeat the history of humanity over, and over. Of course, this is a concept on a macro level, rather than on an individual level, and as such it must be seen as being so. We are, after all, complex beings with interests that are often dichotomous, and reflective of both the objective, as well as subjective, experience of self. There is no easy way to view what we call reality other than the shared experiences we have with others.

It is the world around us that shapes our formative, tangible conceptualizations regarding death. We observe death in art, in architecture, and in the annals of history itself. All these complex aspects have a purpose for us as individuals because they inform us of possibilities of living authentically.

Our world is enveloped wholly by the manifestations of the cross-section between the conscious, and subconscious. We process the world around us on a cognitive level that is always active, and filled with ideas, thoughts, and concepts that are either known or unknown to us. We must objectively see the world in several different ways that approach the truth aspect by aspect. Dissecting our understanding of the objective world around us through scientific inquiry is one powerful way we can do so. Another way is through the analysis of our subconscious through paying attention to our visualizations, as well as passing thoughts.

It is my estimation that through the realization of the objective with the subjective we can hope to approach some form of truth to our existence. This can be observed through experience, because it is through this that we know what we know.

Death strips away personality through non-being. We can experience what this is like by removing ourselves from what we originally perceived ourselves to be. To clarify, I mean that it is possible to experience a foretaste of death through willful dramatic change to one's own personality.

We spend our entire lives building upon foundations that are weak, and we do not seem to recognize this for the most part. When we make an active decision to cast off those trappings of life which grant us a personality, we can start to build new foundations of focused being. With this conscious arsenal of self-awareness, an individual can start to heal deep wounds. Our wounds are generated throughout time, and it is through the recognition that we eventually must decay that we are profoundly humbled. In this humility all tears are wiped away because death has a new meaning.

Non-being, as a concept based on what we can know objectively, is not only a state but a truth that must be known. Once we cross the threshold of this life into death there is the non-phenomenon of non-being. The void is all there is in this state, and all aspects of personality are completely, and forever destroyed.

We can become whole through the acceptance of death by meditating on the void of eternity. This void is composed of decaying matter, and non-material nothingness. As our body decays, we eventually provide nutrients for the Earth to reintegrate into itself. These states are physical, but without the faculties of our conscious mind present. Perhaps this is why people have chosen to leave legacies of some sort in this world prior to death; in that they may not be so quickly forgotten though consciousness is swept away.

The void of those spaces that we will eventually dissipate in holds us captive at every level imaginable. Whether we recognize it or not, we are beholden to the master of life which is eternal death. The void calls out to us through every possible action we can take in this life. This is demonstrable by the concept of foreshadowing which is present in every choice made. What we create for today will eventually decay, and wither.

There cannot be an understanding of life without a genuine, and honest meditation on death. I have mentioned this previously, but it is a point that must be reiterated sincerely. Each moment that we exist is a call out to the void; of which we will eventually be united in dissipation.

Our separation from consciousness is not well understood other than the biological evidence for brain death. Everything beyond that is mere speculation, but even if we were to have additional evidence of continued consciousness it would not matter considering the void. The symbolic meets the objective when we look deeply into our inner desires regarding self-annihilation. The void presents to us a foreshadowing of our own dissipation unto profound everlasting emptiness. The perpetuity of the void is what often frightens us, but it is beneficial to quash this.

Self-annihilation is but one aspect of the process of dying, and becoming reborn on a psychological level. There need not be a physical dying for there to be a genuine annihilation of the self. Consciously we can decide for ourselves whether we wish to free ourselves from our given personality. This is the ultimate darkness, for it brings with it the responsibility of purpose for the individual to take charge of.

Dr. Carl Jung, in his work *The Integration of Personality*, states that emphatically that "man has awakened in a world that he does not understand, and this is why he tries to interpret it." We all attempt to interpret the objective in a way that suits our inner modes of processing things. Each one of us is unique in that we experience our own interpretation of life from a viewpoint that cannot be replicated. This leads us to question the world around us, and our perception of it. What we cannot learn about life, we imagine possibilities that may be true.

We often attempt to decipher this life by means of interpretation, and this is succinctly the case when considering the impulses we have toward survival, and death. Art, history, the complexities of architecture; all these things point toward death in the finality of the principle of non-being. Even nature itself indicates that death is all around us even in the air that we breathe. We see war, famine, torture, and dehumanization always occurring around us, and still, we have a hard time stopping to reflect on the barbarity of all this malevolence.

The dichotomies that exist between subjective, objective, conscious, and unconscious, are superficial at best. We do not know the extent that the subjective has upon the world around us because we experience it in a way that is extremely unique. Science calls for us to be able to replicate, produce, observe, and rationalize the objective world around us, and this is possible to an extent. There are limits however, and those limits extend beyond the subconscious mind into the realm of the subjective. Unless we are willing to investigate deeper into the complexities of the mind, we will not be able to rebuild foundations for ourselves should we decide to psychologically annihilate the concept of the self.

Fear keeps us enslaved to the notion that we are victims of death rather than experiencers that simply go through the process of dying as part of this life. It is almost impossible to rid oneself of fear because it is as primitive of an expression as the desire to live, and die. Even if we take upon ourselves a more stoic view of things, there is still the power of emotions to consider.

We can become transformed emotionally through the self-interpretations that are found through intense introspection. Dr. Carl Jung elaborates on this by saying that "The symbols of transformation portray the process, as well as its dangers, in typical images. The traditional images of the way of initiation are extraordinarily multifarious, at least to a superficial view; on the other hand, the individual course of initiation shows images that are comparable in spite of individual variations."

When we disavow fear from our lives, we are making a bold statement about ourselves concerning our will to exist, and the acceptance of non-existence. We may not be successful in casting off fear, and this is a reality we must contend with. Just as we may not be successful in our striving toward understanding death, we may also fail in other ways which serves only to humble us further.

There is a succinct truth that unveils itself before our very eyes regarding the will to live, and the impulse toward death. Both concepts hang in the balance in our lives because it is a fact that must be contended with. Another stage of humility is brought forth through the realization that we may never live up to our ideals of seeking out knowledge regarding life, and death.

The dreaming state can reveal much about our connection to the symbolic when contemplating death. We often dream about familiar locations, places we have visited, people we know, and situations that are sometimes fantastical, while other times the scenarios are completely ordinary in nature. When we dream, we are in a parallel state of consciousness that is based on all that we know about life.

It is during our lives that we become enriched by the knowledge of the dying process in a very real way. This is a gift (or a curse) to all who walk this Earth because we are taught about the reality of death through experience, if not formal education. Indeed, it is through experience that we find our greatest teacher in this life, and a true companion throughout this strange existence.

We cannot perceive death beyond the physical, but we can attempt to understand it on a symbolic, and subjective level. When we take steps to dissect the inner workings of the dying process on an artistic level, we can then take our findings with us into the objective world through our scientific knowledge.

The symbolic brings us closer to a more nuanced understanding of the world around us, and the many themes concerning death. It is through this nuanced understanding that foundations are built for the individual. What I mean by this is that there is a powerful impetus for change found through cognitive awareness. When we decide to be mindful of our surroundings, we can process our experiences both subjectively, and objectively.

Regardless of how we gain our knowledge, there is no more direct way toward understanding death than by experiencing it vicariously through a loved one dying. We often notice strange subtleties when those we love begin to slip away from consciousness into non-being. In the twilight of life, there is a resignation that begins with a shift in attitude.

It is through death that we find our greatest catalyst to live authentically while we still have the chance. There are many ways that we can justify this statement, one of which is that death as a concept informs our cognitive space. Another form of justification is found through the interpretation, and recognition of symbolism within the subconscious mind. In the ultimate scheme of things, we are tied intrinsically to the great mast of life that looms over us reminding us of death, and the terrible presence of eternity.

Chapter Five

Self-Liberation is a Source of Inner Power.

By recognizing the importance of looking at life from the perspective of the temporal, we can enhance our daily lives in an impactful way. Everything that we experience becomes touched by death through our conscious desire to become aware of our mortality. There are many ways that we can focus on our deaths, but the most effective way is to be present in the moment during each experience we have.

Temporality is inclusive of the recognition of our mortality, but it is much more than that. It is a constant reminder of the fact that everything is highly subject to the ravages of time before our very eyes. All things decay, and transmute into something else when the time has come for this to happen. We eventually lose consciousness, and this is something we must come to terms with.

We self-liberate through affirming our mortality in a way that gives us a semblance of control. This control is ephemeral in that we must also recognize that we are limited by the restrictions set against us in this life. It is through the illusion of control that we can change our perspectives regarding our life, and the position we hold in this world. Our mindsets can easily be changed through deep reflection on the transitory nature of our own lives.

Regardless of where we find ourselves in terms of emotional maturity, there is always a chance to become reborn within our own psychic life. It is through self-destruction via mental recognition of our own limitations that we become empowered to face our own deaths. We must investigate our lives as if we are staring into a mirror, for there are many aspects of who we are that reflect the falsehood of social conditioning.

Self-liberation comes through continual learning, as well as cognitive processing of those things which must come to pass. We are caught in

between two worlds: that of life, and of death. This is a fact that must be contended with, especially if we are to be honest with ourselves. Death brings us the ultimate equalization of what we know versus what is ultimately unknowable. This is the great mystery of the eternal.

The mind is liberated through a process of unlearning as well. When we make the conscious decision to learn more about death from a psychological standpoint, we are admitting to ourselves that what we know will eventually become nothing. We cannot take our knowledge with us to the grave. Another great mystery of life is the idea that we should create some sort of legacy for ourselves, and others. Why do we see things in this light? Perhaps it is because we are deathly afraid of the process of unbecoming.

The will is expressed eloquently through the nuanced conceptualization of mortality, and this is even more so for those who have chosen to mentally self-annihilate themselves to be reborn on a fundamental level. Death shows to us the very form of humanity in that it is composed of a profound fragility. Cognitive recognition of the physical nature of dying brings to us a balanced understanding of the terms of life, and death. We are at a crossroads of decision making when it comes to recognizing our mortality as the reality it is. When we choose to view life as the temporal manifestation of consciousness, we can become free.

There is nothing we can do to stop the endless march of time, but we can maximize this time through self-realization, and discovery. Art is the ultimate manifestation of the abstract aspects of immortality in that there is a residual effect upon future generations that observe it. This observation is a realization that there is beauty to be found in the temporal, and in the thirst for immortality through self-expression. When we appreciate a work of art whether it be music, sculpture, film, or something else, we are expressing our own primitive desire for immortality as well. This is a powerful example of the thirst humanity has for existence.

We can, as individuals, proceed with the understanding that we are to embrace a transient sort of inner power which elevates our lives profoundly. This inner power is fueled by the awareness of death as a given, and it prepares us for those final moments when we will be at the edge of dying. None of us can predict how we are going to ultimately react to this understanding, but it is necessary for there to be such a change in mind if we are going to live without being disingenuous to ourselves.

There is a peace that comes with the understanding of mortality, but this is not to be taken lightly because it is a heavy emotional transition from ignorance to knowledge. This transition is gradual in the sense that it is not immediately apparent to the individual, but it eventually becomes visible to others. What I mean by this is that there is a sustainable change in attitude, communication with others, and self-report that comes over time.

Individuals can maximize their time in life by taking long pauses to recognize the gradual changes that overcome us through aging. The aging process is but one reminder of the limited time that we have here on this Earth, but it is a potent one. It is interesting how most of us simply ignore the fact that we too shall become aged, and go about our daily lives with the interests of youth at our hands.

When we recognize the connection between each change that life brings, we can more succinctly take hold of the reins of existence if only for a temporary time frame. This temporary control, or illusion of control, can only assist us through the most difficult of times, should the need arise for it.

All things are transient, this much is known. The power of the inner world of an individual is governed by desire, willingness to grow, and the reaching out toward the basic necessities of life. Before we are to embrace this transient nature of ours it is prudent to consider that we must also be psychologically prepared to change. If one thing is constant in this life, it is change. This much we can know, but we also must be cognizant of the fact that we also must eventually decay.

By accepting the inevitability of death, we can illuminate those aspects of our selves which we were previously ignorant of. Our personalities are shaped by death in a way that is not always readily apparent. From a subconscious point of view, death is a concept that is as common as fantastical worlds where we dream that we are in absolute control of our existence. This is, of course, a matter of subjectivity, yet there is truth to the concept that we are unconscious of just how close we are to the death principle.

From a sociological aspect, it is fascinating to see how religious traditions can serve to transform an individual on a fundamental level. There is a certain focus on death, as many religions utilize this point of reality as a steppingstone for their mythologies. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and several other religions focus heavily on death as being either ephemeral or a fact that is but one step in maintaining consciousness. Consciousness is seen by several of these religious beliefs as being almost abstract, and not of this world. Perhaps there are some truths to these concepts, but the fact of the matter is we will likely never know.

Our place in this world is not set in stone, but there are parameters in which we must conform if only on a superficial level. Stoicism is a path that can be taken to deal with the uncertainties of life, and the dying process. We can remain at ease knowing that all our troubles will eventually cease upon death, though we still generally fear the unknown of what might exist beyond our objective knowledge regarding it.

In the end, we are fragile beings filled with false illusions regarding life that serve only to delude us from the profound truths of death. Death is a magnifying glass, so to speak, into the depths of the human psyche in that it is an all-powerful reality that must be succumbed to. Rich, poor, affluent, or influential individuals all must contend with, and concede their existence to the power of death. It is this power that constrains us to find new ways to express ourselves while we are still alive.

There is a method by which we can accept those aspects of life which are reminiscent of death. This method involves radical acceptance of life in a stoic way, even if our desires are geared toward the will to live, or the death impulse. The death impulse is strong within each one of us, but it does not ultimately factor into every single decision some of us make. Sometimes we are influenced by the will to survive, and this may influence our choices in daily life.

The death impulse is powerful here, though, because it still lingers even if we ultimately choose to live. Deciding whether to either live or die requires a certain identification of the limitations of the individual being recognized, and acquiesced to. Whether it is a matter of dealing with too much pain, or internal mental suffering, any decision we make regarding our lives is done so with immense awareness, and preparation.

The stoic path is one in which there are tumultuous influences upon the individual, but one remains steadfast in acceptance. To be accepting of death means that one is also accepting of what life may bring. This is the dual acceptance that is complex, yet intertwined. We juggle the two within those spaces of the mind that are profoundly unknown. It is in the realm of the unknown that we come closer to the true nature of the subconscious experience.

One cannot be too prepared when focusing the mind on the dying process, as it is easy to get caught up in a sense of morbidity that influences emotions. To elaborate, I mean that there is a deep awareness that awakens within the individual at the point where the contemplation on death is paramount to the living experience. This awareness awakens a consciousness expanding principle within the individual that is intensely experienced. When there is an intense experience that is induced by the individual present, there is an accompanying sense of emptiness that expands the mind of the individual. Emptiness brings with it a principled understanding into how death is ultimately viewed. Active emptiness is present when we choose to reflect on the death impulse that exists within each one of us.

Freedom involves a price that is paid in one's own blood through an upheaval of the former understanding of the self. By blood I mean a symbolic reckoning of the individual in question which involves an ideological revolution in self-annihilation toward the creation of the new being. The new being, or freed individual, is made whole through a re-creation of the self, built on foundations of awareness, and knowledge. The combination of these foundational aspects acts upon each other in the grand scheme of things.

Awareness brings with it a personal responsibility to live authentically, but this is of course ultimately a choice much like other things in life. When there is an upheaval of the self through self-annihilation on a psychological level, there is a reconstruction taking place with new foundations. These new foundations are roundly stolid in their composition, for there is a real need for it in the re-creation of the individual.

Foundations need to be nourished with the mindfulness of being that can only be manifested by the individual. Death need not be a prison, but a tool whereby our lives can be enriched through a nuanced understanding of the temporal. It is in the temporal that we find ourselves experiencing the same events (or at least similar ones) daily, without meaning assigned to them intrinsically. We must be brave enough to assign meaning for ourselves to everyday experiences, but this requires an acquiescence to the notion that what we choose to do is subjectively done with a mind toward awareness.

Every life is a story which can be chosen to be told to others in the form of observing others, and their habits. When we see how others live, it is an indication that we also experience life similarly, if not in a mostly individualized way. Returning to the idea that awareness, and knowledge act upon each other, it must also be said that a mind focused on the present rather than the past, or future is necessary toward rebuilding a new self. This is easier said than done, but it is something that will enhance the individual's ability to move past outdated views of the self.

Through the understanding of death, there are potentialities that are reached, and visualized by the individual. These potentialities are succinct in that they become guideposts whereby the self can anchor to one's own foundations. Cognitive understanding, as it is found in human beings, can be extended to the mastery of one's own primary goal in life.

It is okay if there is no meaning that is assigned to life. Even choosing not to recognize meaning is an active participation in building foundations of belief, and unbelief. It is suggested in my philosophy that meaning is possible through a rebirth of one's own conceptualization of the self as a construct to be rebuilt.

We must choose whether to tear down those complex aspects of personality that have been assigned to us since birth. A revolution of being is found through the decision to stand up, and proclaim the limited power of the will toward life, and death. Gratefulness, hope, understanding, and the search for authenticity are intertwined. It is not through dogmatic definitions of these things that we find ourselves enraptured in. We are peculiar beings in that there is a uniqueness to our abstractions. Our ability to dissect the minutiae of things through linguistics, and philosophy is unique to our species.

The conceptualizations we have regarding common human emotions are skewed by the fact that we do not often look toward death as an anchoring point to our interactions with others. If we were to do so, we would experience an abundance of self-directed benefits in our lives. Anchoring ourselves upon the concept of death is crucial to living, and behaving in a manner that is conducive to the wellbeing of the self, and of others. There is an altruistic background to the self-revolution of rebuilding the core of one's authentic personality. This background is informed by the powerful subconscious desire to experience death in a way that allows for consciousness to remain present in the process. We are at the cusp of examining the truth when we question how exactly we will die. When we converse with others, our choice of topic will be informed by death. In this light, we are urged to create a sense of meaning where there is none.

It is through the power of the authentic that we can emerge from our previous state of confusion toward a more educated one. Nothing can stop the individual that chooses to consolidate their will toward a fuller understanding of death. In a mind that is focused on death, there is a profound knowledge to be discovered within the subconscious. It is here that the individual is provoked by the will to become powerful if only for a moment in our habitual weakness. It is a memorable state that, like other states, is ephemeral in nature and not lasting.

When we interact with others, we call forth those aspects of non-being that we will eventually enter when we die. If we are to continue to create advancements for the sake of humanity, we surely can move forward in our ideals regarding the dying process. Both aspects of desire, and action, are just as valid as the other. In my estimation there is a truth to be experienced in both the dying process as well as the advancements of situational knowledge in daily life.

There is gracefulness to be found in the acceptance of the end of things. This can be applied to relationships, experiences, and even ideologies which no longer serve us personally. When examined, it is almost horrifying to think of the difficulty one must go through to shed oneself of anything at all related to the personality. These things are not to be taken lightly, especially because of the fact that our foundations are based on constructs that are extremely fragile. It is in this fragility that the self is destroyed, and a new mode of being is brought forth.

The new being within the individual is based on a recognition that all constructs prior to the decision to self-annihilate are weak foundations. This recognition allows for there to be a flourishing of self-willed power, even if one's own external circumstances are bleak. There is a change that presents itself not only to the individual, but to the outside world as well. This change is based on new foundations which are sturdier than the last, for they are based on conscious decisions rather than circumstance alone. The self has fundamentally changed at this juncture, because it is recognized as being only real through the force of the will.

When we are forthright with ourselves regarding our mortality, and the position we find ourselves in this world, we are humbled by the nature of this change we experience. The change toward humility is found through not only the recognition of death as a reality, but of the temporal nature of experience. Humility brings us closer to the truth surrounding our lowliness as creatures of this Earth. In the final estimation of things, it is possible to see that there is a void that we must look forward to.

It is ultimately up to us to decide whether we will create for ourselves a new foundation of being through death awareness, or no. Whatever the decision an individual makes is completely informed by their own expression of the will.

It is easier to wear a figurative mask than to expose oneself to the truth of the ugliness of humanity. The conceptualization of self-esteem is recognized here, but it completely crushes us through the brutal honesty we must hold ourselves to, should we concede to the truth.

As we come to grips with the truth of the matter, which is that dying is the ultimate experience, we paradoxically can relish those moments of life which are fleeting. Each experience that we go through, then, has a new meaning to it when seen in the light of death awareness. This is a profound example of how we will change when actively annihilating the concept of the prior construct of a self.

There is a new understanding to be had when going through the symbolic experience of death. Death is the ultimate equalizer, and this is demonstrated further by the power that it holds over our psyche. Our subconscious mind is unfettered by the dogmatic leftovers in our conscious waking experience.

When we tap into the power of the subconscious, we make amends with the primal experience of life over tradition. The primitive aspects of self-annihilation are made paramount over the other intense instincts such as survival, and personal well-being by meeting basic needs. The subconscious ultimately serves to remind us to be honest with ourselves.

Purpose can therefore be found through the self-annihilative aspect of action toward oneself. This, once again, does not refer to physical suicide, but a mental break in which the continuum of being is temporarily broken. It is in this brokenness that the individual comes to learn of the importance of contemplation on the void, or center of non-being. Non-being is again that state in which there is no state of existence whatsoever. It is the complete inverse of being, and living. We can still strive to thrive in this life even with this poisonous knowledge.

No matter how fleeting life seems to be, it is through experience that we feel a lasting impact on our psyche that cannot be measured easily. The older we become, the more intense our memories leave a lasting impact upon our minds. This intensity molds us in an objective way because it turns our minds toward the eternal through reliving one's own prior memories.

It is through philosophical exercises that we can learn to deal with the grief of existence. Every situation we find ourselves is tainted with the shadow of grief, no matter how innocuous it may seem to us. In the end, we must make the conscious decision whether we are bold enough to recognize that we are mortal, and that each day must be maximized in a way as to serve our own conceptualization of purpose. These conceptualizations are based on self-education, acknowledgment of the fallibility of one's own conjectures, and a humility toward death that is profoundly felt.

New conceptualizations can be found through continual challenges of the self which orient individuals toward more nuanced understandings of experience. Not everything in this world is black, or white. There are so many shades of grey that turn up on every corner, every block, and in every suburban household. We may be individuals, but we are also highly influenced by the world around us either through entrainment, or general education. These truths are manifested by simple deduction through observing the outside world without prejudice. By doing so, the individual

goes through a powerful change within the self that recognizes these gradients in truth.

It is through the multifaceted exploration of consciousness that we can uplift ourselves into a veritable garden of knowledge through death awareness. Though there is a great deal of sorrow to be found in the knowledge of death from a realistic viewpoint, there is also a sense of joy to be found through authenticity. There is a focal point of power to be had within this authenticity because it is based on the ideal that the will is manifesting the desire to know death from an objective point of view.

We can continue to live our lives without the examination of death, but to what end? If there truly is no purpose in life, the very least we can do is examine what is in front of us from an objective angle. Doing so creates a sort of quasi-meaning which, though it is detached from eternal purpose, is settled directly in the present. It is this moment of being present in time that we find ourselves contending with the truth of life. We cannot know where consciousness goes after death, but we can create works of art that last beyond our demise.

Our creativity is our ultimate savior in times of darkest distress. The appreciation for, and participation in the arts allows for the individual to express the angst that always exists within oneself. Everyone is filled with this angst, whether it is admitted, or not, and it carries with it an energy of darkness that must be contended with. Regardless of whether we choose to examine death consciously, we will eventually come face to face with this confrontation in time.

Time is a manifestation of the aspect of reality which deals with aging, change, and the passing of moments from one into another. We are physically locked into the laws of time, and space. Subjectively, we are beyond these constraints in our dream world, but this is of course illusory in nature. Art allows us to make manifest those dream worlds within the objective timeline of creation. It is through the deepest agonizing emotions that true art is made known to others. Whether the emotions are grief

related or not, it is of no great consequence. All aspects of human experience are locked into death as a component of the truth of being. In my estimation, this is what is called the apparition of the death impulse.

Chapter Six

The Symbolism of Near-Death Experiences Explored.

Near death experiences can be seen in the light of psychological processes that take place in the individual during those rare times of life-threatening experiences. When we go through extreme experiences that are vitally profound in nature, we experience a form of enlightenment based on individual knowledge that is gained. This knowledge then allows the individual to make a conscious decision to continue on the mental path of ruminating upon death.

Symbolism here is powerful in that it is based on the subjective experience of the dying process, and can only be accounted for on an individual level. We can see the world around us with objectivity through the knowledge we gain in formal education, but we will always have a subjective angle to our thoughts. We cannot control this, because we are continually processing information on a level that is based on inner experience, and projection.

Nothing can stop the individual from experiencing the incredible subjective truths that are gleamed through the near-death experience. It is through the physical experience of losing one's own senses that the individual can see the humble situation before them. We are brought down from great heights despite our claims of greatness as a species.

When we are brought down from these heights, it is experienced on an individual level. This experience cannot be duplicated by anyone, for we all experience our own hell of existence uniquely. It is through the individual experience of the subjective that there is a powerful stimulus for change within the conceptualization of the self. A stimulus, as is seen in the changing individual, brings each one of us to our knees in utter despair. This despair corners us into a figurative hole of our own creation.

The unconscious mind allows for there to be a depth of expression for the individual that is experiencing the subjective. This expression is unique to each person, and cannot be replicated. One of the greatest mysteries of this life is found in those moments of contemplation on death, and the dying process. It is here that the individual can become intertwined with the objective, and subjective aspects of life.

It is in an unconscious state that we bear the fruit of our subjective experiences in the real world around us. We can share our experiences with others to communicate the subjective into the objective world. This is where we find a sort of bond between others that is unique in that it originates from the construct of the self.

Objective truths are experienced in the unconscious mind as subjective images, symbolism, and passing thoughts. The subjective images are inspired by art, the fears (and hopes) of individuals, and replays of nearly forgotten memories. Symbolism presents itself in a way that any subject that is thought of becomes something other than what we imagine it to be. Our passing thoughts are solidifications of those symbols which are always present in the subconscious mind.

There is a powerful energetic purpose behind the concept of living authentically, and this is based on the idea that what we experience is a wellspring for death. Death teaches us about the limited nature of not just our own lives, but of all things that exist. When we allow ourselves to learn from death, especially by the experience of having others around us die, we are liberating ourselves from the shackles of fear.

The near-death experience is of course subjective, but it is based on possibilities that may occur during the actual dying process. When we lose aspects of our consciousness either through hearing, smelling, tasting, or seeing, we become profoundly changed on a fundamental level. This change is due to the connectedness that we experience when we go through the dying process for ourselves. When we awaken from our experience, we are forever changed as individuals.

When we perceive ourselves to be in the unmistakable reality of our temporal natures, we can determine whether it is feasible for us to trust in our subjective experiences, or not. There is a great leap to be had from believing in the objective to experiencing the subjective as a form of one's own reality. In this darkest moment of despair, the individual grasps onto the objective world in vain.

Documenting our own experiences through writing, journaling, or communicating with others can create a new dialog that is based on a marriage between two dichotomous forces (namely the objective, and subjective). Art can be created from these forces which move, and create the laws of reality for each one of us. There is no limit to what constitutes art because everything we do is a part of a greater creative force imbedded in each one of us.

Reality, at the very baseline, is found in shared experiences, and laws of nature made known through logic, and physical observation. We all experience subjective experiences, and this is why they are in fact named as such. Some portions of our own reality simply cannot be replicated on a universal level, and this is a horrific truth. Why is this horrific? It is determined to be so based on the idea that we are terribly alone in our experiences at the end of our lives.

Authenticity, therefore, is based not on whether a person merely changes their opinion regarding any given topic concerning life, but has a foundation in the profound internal change that occurs when an individual decides to live in truth. Self-annihilation is one route toward this authenticity, and again, it is not indicated as a merely physical action toward the self.

I am discussing the destruction of the *construct* of the self which resides within the individual on a mental level. This is almost as devastating an experience as physical suicide because it requires a loss of what one knows to be true. There is a deep despair within the heart of one that wishes to divest oneself from the concept of personal identity on any level.

The subjective, in tandem with the objectively known, provides for a combination that is based on a profound exploration of the depths of our minds. We can see with a level of scrutiny that is inward facing in those moments when we are most lucid regarding our own future deaths.

Our minds are powerfully complex systems that can rationalize the objectively known with the subjectively experienced. These experiences, and knowledge, are based on what we can absorb through both formal, as well as informal education. Our constructs that we build for ourselves come crumbling down when we are open to both the subjective, and objective, as possible realities made flesh. When this happens, we are devastated on such a level that we lose all semblance of our personal foundations, boundaries, and even our ideologies.

Logic brings us to a deeper understanding of where we are headed in terms of ideological breakthroughs on a personal level. On a personal level our minds are rife with the possibilities that may befall us individually as human beings. Our subjective, and subconscious minds are constantly working to either bring us to a higher level of peaceful existence, or to torture us with distortions of thought. Distortions of thought are mental illnesses, unfulfilled aspirations, and general misconceptions about the world, and circumstances surrounding our lives.

The authentic can be found in an honest dialogue with the individual reaching out towards the temporal nature of being. This dialogue is not necessarily outward facing, or directed towards other individuals, but is a personal recognition of the frailty in which we find ourselves existing. The frailty of being is one of the greatest mysteries of life, because we always carry around the illusion that we are composed of stronger elements than we truly are. Death, or the experience of some element relating to it, is a powerful impetus toward seeing life from an authentic point of view. An impetus as strong as death awareness does not exist in this world, because even the heights of creativity, and art are mere outlines of the profundity of morbid thoughts. Human beings are aware of death, but do not often actively pursue the contemplation of its mysteries.

In the perceived solitude of the near-death experience, where the individual becomes aware of their inner world more acutely, resides a key whereby we can decipher the role of the subjective in the objective world. This solitude is the deepest experience an individual can go through because it is based on the degloving of the concept of the self with the person in question. There is a strong tie between the subjective, and objective here, in that it should be explored in a manner that is both inquisitive, and honorific at the same time.

The inner world of an individual is composed of thoughts, ideals, symbolism, and the construction of an existence dependent on subjectivizing the objective. There is a clear balancing act that takes place when we are in the midst of living both truths. We cannot avoid mentally forging a place for ourselves in the collective subconscious with our perennial pursuits regarding life, and death. We are equally obsessed with both, even though we would often fail to admit this. In the nakedness of the near-death experience there is a wordless expression of this truth within the very heart of the individual.

Of course, there is logic that must be contended with when processing the concept of a near-death experience. We must concede that what we might experience could possibly be just chemicals reacting within the brain. Everything we experience then would be irrelevant up until the point of death because all purpose would be based on the individual, and their choice to do something of value for themselves.

No one is ever really prepared to die, no matter how well versed we are in the ways of understanding our mortality. This truth is something that we must be cognizant of because our sanity hinges upon this. We must be prepared at least in the theoretical experience of death, though this experience might pale in comparison to the true one. When we realize that we are limited in our scope of understanding the world around us, we can then become familiar with death on a humbler level. By doing this, we are elevating our mentality toward the truth of the matter which is inclusive of death awareness.

Ancestral symbolism, through cultural artefacts, allows for a limited expression of those subjective experiences that some have gone through. Reliving the death experience through primitive religious rituals has some value, if only to serve to rectify the concept of non-being with the individual. When we identify with some heroic figure either of history, or in fiction, we can carry that heavy load of existence a little further than we expected. This, of course, is a form of self-illusory deceit, and justly so, because the individual is masking themselves in the supposed triumphs of another. Our life story is not fiction, but a fact that is passing us by every second.

Art always has a way of expressing to others the diffused private nature of the near-death experience. It is a manifestation of our inner fears, joys, ambiguities, and ambitions. Art is ephemeral, and though it often has a chance of lasting past our lives, it will still decay, and eventually be forgotten. What is eternal then? Nothing, in my estimation, remains the same. Everything is continually changing, moving, and manifesting in different ways that are unique to the one experiencing it.

Although we cannot fully comprehend what another individual goes through when they make a self-report about the dying process, we can create a dialogue surrounding this. The power of the near-death experience is found in those testimonies from survivors that have completely changed their lives afterward. It is through these changes that new aspects of personality shine forth that were not apparent to the individual at first. This, in my opinion, is the conceptualization of the self which begins to dissolve through either an active, or inactive action toward the abyss of non-being.

It is not only through first-hand experience that we can understand death, but it certainly provides a powerful impetus for us to make foundational changes to our own lives. The death impulse, which is always present with us, contains within it a key whereby we can understand better the near-death experience. Our concept of life is completely shattered when we consider the possibilities that death brings to us.

It is through the dying experience that the individual is renewed as the perception of the symbolic becomes hyper-real in that moment of non-being. This hyper-reality is posed as a threat to our own sense of well-being because it goes against all that we have believed previously regarding our state of purpose. Language only serves to confuse, and muddle the point here that I am trying to make which is that the near-death experience is ultimately transformative on a subjective level.

Transformation, building new foundations, and summoning the courage to live (and die) gracefully are at the heart of the near-death experience. All these aspects of the dying process are brought together by both a conscious, as well as unconscious desire to experience non-being in the most painless way possible. These desires together form an unstoppable, unquenchable force of being that impels us to do those things which lead to our inevitable death. We do not actively see it, but everything that we do is a dress rehearsal for the dying process.

The renewal found through the dying process is one in which the individual is stripped completely of any pre-conceived notions of the self. The self, as a construct, becomes primed for this renewal because it is an ever-changing center of being for the individual. When the center of balance is knocked off completely, there is utter chaos for the individual until a new foundation is in place. This is the case when someone experiences a profound change through traumatic moments of life that activate in us as time goes on.

Of course, all of this is theory, but it is connected to a logical chain of thought. We exist, and are forced to contend with our sordid purpose on this Earth as wanderers in the desert of life. It is in the blankness of this desert of the mind, this wilderness, apart from the outside world, that we find ourselves questioning the purpose of our lives. We find ourselves in this desert or wilderness of being through the despair that we uncover from dogmatic approaches to purpose. We have all fundamentally failed to uncover anything other than this despair, and it becomes clearer over time as we witness our friends, and comrades wither away before us.

The concept of non-being is complex in that it involves a dissolution of the current understanding of being, and time. There is a sense of the eternal in the near-death experience because it is experienced without the tools that we are provided with to understand the world around us. We cannot rely on our senses when we are amid the changes that occur when we are at the cusp of death. There is a dimming of the self-constructed being at this moment in time, and there is no turning back to the mental state that one has had before.

Dissolution, decay, and maturation throughout time all provide clues whereby we can find the essence of authenticity beneath all the façades we often present to others. Our meditation on these factors allows us to propel ourselves emotionally forward through maturity on a level that is beneficial to us as individuals.

Inauthentic ways of living are dissolved slowly throughout the process of understanding the near-death experience. Our environment around us also influences how we eventually come to understand the values that death can teaches us. We never know the lengths that our emotional values will take us because once we cross the threshold of the dying experience, we throw ourselves into the abyss of the creative aspects of non-being. These creative aspects are related to death because they are based on conceptualizations that come to us automatically which reflect the human experience in its totality all at once.

Death is but one experience that can bring us closer to the authentic, as there exist a myriad of others. It must be said, however, that without the knowledge of our mortality we cannot grow sufficiently. We can grow through formal education, life experiences, and individual moments of reflection that we come across when we interact with others. Each of these experiences are overwhelmingly powerful in that even the most benign of interactions with others has a ripple effect on the way we eventually perceive death. This ripple effect is not immediately noticed by the individual, because there is no specific point in time when we know whether our experiences are going to be significant.

The return from a near-death experience can provide a catalyst for inner change on a fundamental level. This change is permanent because it is founded based on the deepest of all possible experiences. The depths of the near-death experience extend toward the outside world in that the individual will continue to act upon it in an influential way. This influence is not seen as being a typical sort of spreading of one's own inner dialogue so much as it is a transformation that cannot be hidden any longer.

One way that an individual can change is through their own personal outlook on life, and how they choose to interact with others following a harrowing experience. Perhaps there are new cognitive advancements, and abilities that allow the individual to thrive in a way that was just not possible prior to the near-death experience. The conceptualization of experiencing a personal journey can provide some form of understanding for an otherwise nonsensical experience. There may have been some form of illusory meeting with some divine entity which interacted with the individual on some meaningful private level. Another situation is that there could have been an experience of absolute nothingness which is just as profound.

It is through the dying process that the subject loses the concept or understanding of personhood from an individual perspective. This loss of identity is felt as it reverberates throughout the individual experiencing this.

Everyone must cross the bridge of death at some point in this experience we call life. When we do cross it, we cannot expect to tell our tale to anyone, as we will be within the void of non-being. Besides the tragedies of sentience that befall us as mere mortals, we are covered entirely by the ominous concept that we may end up as mere particles with no semblance of consciousness in the void. This scares many people, and for good reason; it is the exact opposite of what we have come to know as baseline reality.

Chapter Seven

Subjectivity, and Objectivity Examined Closer.

The subjective, as well as the objective, can be seen as two separate entities in terms of linguistic, and conceptual concerns. They can also be seen as one side of the same coin, so to speak, as both concepts are in reference to how we perceive reality. Without a grounding in the objective, there is no way for there to be a solid understanding on a scientific level for those things which concern the knowable, and replicable.

Linguistically, we can describe what the subjective is like, but it is still not fully decipherable. We can experience the subjective in a personal manner, but these experiences do not always translate into the objective world, or in a way of being communicated actively. Our objective world is colored by the subjective in a profound way.

The objective informs us of shared experiences, laws of nature, and the observable, whilst the subjective mind processes each of these things in an individualistic way. We can attempt to communicate the subjective in the objective world through art, language, and active communication with others, but we cannot hope to replicate our own experiences universally. This is so because the baseline of reality is founded upon what we can objectively know, and anything that falls outside of its rigid definition cannot fully be known. Habit is one form of attempting to resolve this.

Arthur Schopenhauer, in *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer*, states that "real force of habit, as a matter of fact, rests upon that indolent, passive disposition which seeks to relieve the intellect and the will of a fresh choice, and so makes us do what we did yesterday and have done a hundred times before, and of which we know that it will attain its object." Schopenhauer here shows that we tend to act specifically as we know by habit.

The specious nature of our world allows for there to be some leeway between the objective, and subjective aspects of life. What I mean by this is that there are ways that the objective can be viewed in such a way as to be penetrated by the subjective experience of the individual. This penetration is forced upon the individual in a way that influences the singular vision that one has regarding the objective world.

We know what is objectively true through consensus, yet the subjective always holds sway over the individual. The subjective experience of life is fantastical at times, and is often based on dreams, ideals, and passing thoughts. Sometimes our subjective mind is possessed by the familiar, and reacts to the objective outside world with a predictable response depending on the scenario. The subconscious mind processes all objective truths in a way that allows there to be a highly individualistic expression of being within each person.

Habit keeps us from recognizing the significance of the objective when considering the subjective processing of information inherent in each of us. Though habit can be at times attributable to the destructive behavior of human beings at the most primitive of levels, it can also be utilized to continually ground the individual on a fundamental level. This is important to note because, like anything in life, there is a limit to which we should become possessed by any aspect of personality. Obsession can bring an individual down to the deepest depths as well as fuel pure genius at the same time.

It is through self-introspection, as well as logic, that the individual can become empowered by their own experiences. Schopenhauer, in his Essays, elaborates on this by stating emphatically that "the man who thinks for himself, forms his own opinions and learns the authorities for them only later on, when they serve but to strengthen his belief in them and in himself." When habit is added to the strengthening of beliefs in conceptualizations of the mind, there can be foundational growth which affects all aspects of the individual, and their life.

As we move forward into our post-modern society, we must be willing to realize that the subjective is just as vital to our survival as the objective. Both aspects are just as important as the other because we build foundations in both worlds. The psychological aspect of the subconscious mind is inward facing, and inclusive of the subjective as part, and parcel of the entirety of the individual experience.

Our minds process things in a way that allows for there to be a realization of the necessity behind both the objective, and subjective experiences. We are calm, collected, and confident at times where we can say that we do have a balance between these two aspects, but this is something that does not last long. Nevertheless, we are in the midst of a choice between seeing the world from the angle of the balance between subjective, and objective states, and denying such a connection.

The subjective teaches us how to process the present moment in such a way that it becomes a unique experience. An example of this is a medical student performing a surgical technique, and processing this procedure in the subjective mind through utilizing individual logic from within the self. Another example is someone learning from an educational text, and subjectively processing the contents in a way that they absorb the essential information, but experience it in a manner that is highly individualized.

Objectivity is but one way to view the world around us. We necessarily are tied to it in a scientific, and factual manner, but we must also be cognizant of this as well in a conscious way. For us to function at all in this world, there are laws of nature which we must abide by. Nonetheless, the individual is responsible for recognizing these worldly limitations, and maximizing one's own place in the world through a cohesion of the subjective with the objective. There is a uniqueness to the individual experience that cannot be duplicated by anyone else's life. This is where the subjective comes in, and influences individuals to a degree that is seriously impactful on their lives. This impact is powerful because it is based on a recognition of the wholeness of life.

Individuals have a limited choice in the matter of whether they will view objective truths from a subjective vantage point, or no. The subjective is always present. We are always bidden to the truth of the subjective because it is always beckoning to us from the background of our lives. Wherever we go, with whomever we speak to, at whatever level of interaction, *all* intercepts directly with the subjective, and the subconscious mind. There are liminal spaces here to consider as well, but this is the space in between both the objective, and subjective.

When we view objective truths utilizing the subjective symbolism found in mental abstractions, we process the reality of our position in this world more accurately. We cannot fully know our place in this world because there are some principles that are not fully known yet. These principles involve the extent of consciousness, as well as whether what we are experiencing isn't some sort of elaborate illusion of some kind.

Abstractions allow for us to sort out the harsh realities presented to us through the objective world. Death is a very real physical condition, formed through the dying process, and made complete in the absence of brain activity, and a pulse. When we consider the physical realities of death, and process them in a personalized emotional way, we are creating automatic meaning in a meaningless world.

There are many worlds to be found within the subconscious mind; all of which are beholden to the objective in some way. What I mean by this is that there is a powerful experience to be had when considering the contemplation of our subconsciousness. To elaborate, I also mean that the objective is concrete, and is represented to some degree throughout the subconscious mind. Even if there are situations in which our subconscious does not imagine that it obeys the laws of physics, it is still fully dependent upon it in some way. We are prisoners of the dichotomies found between objective, and subjective experiences. We cannot know what true baseline reality is, save for our shared experiences which do not vary through scientific scrutiny.

Symbolism is found in the artistic, which is a physical manifestation of individual desires of the unknown aspects of consciousness. The artistic is powerful as an aspect of the human condition made flesh because it is tied intrinsically with all sorts of experiences that we pass through.

Art allows for there to be a direct conduit between processed experiences, and the passing of the objective in time. When we look back upon a work of art, we can observe the subjective changes that we have gone through if it is one of our own. Perhaps a specific mindset is captured at the moment of the creation of such an art piece. Upon further reflection, even our own works of art are in a way only representative of a part of who we are, and not the totality. This reflection allows us to see more acutely the truths that the artistic realm brings to us.

Time keeps us focused on those subtle changes which precede experiences in life by keeping us aware of those things which affect us in the grand scheme. We can create a cloud of illusion over our consciousness, but we cannot deny the effects, nor the existence of time. It is one of those objective principles that also plays a part in the subconscious. The subconscious is constantly processing time in a way that, though it might be distorted, still exists because it is a product of shifting imagery, mental scenarios, and passing thoughts. Each of these shifting aspects of the mind exist within time, and are subjected to it regardless of the case.

Our awareness of the effects of aging, time, and experiences allows us to be closer to the truth of our mortality. Though, again, we often do not ruminate closely upon these truths, it is what keeps us cognizant of the wariness of death, and its products in our lives. When we see in cultural circles the denial of aging through cosmetic or other advanced scientific treatment, we are also witnessing the intentional blinding of the self to the awareness of death. Mortality, as a universal truth, keeps us aware of our reliance on the subjective to find answers to our burning questions on life. Life brings to us an abundance of hints, and clues as to what death might bring.

By looking inward in an introspective manner, we can turn our inner vision of the self into a humbler conception of being. What I mean by this is that our constructed ideas of the self, and of being, are fundamentally flawed, and require a complete divestment of both to reach a humble state of mind. This humility is a baseline for a moral worldview which is inclusive specifically of the death impulse as the primary focal point. Our will toward death is sufficient reason to consider that we do not truly know our complete natures.

We do not have to rely on superstition, nor tradition when it comes to exploring the inner spaces of the mind. What we have before us is the blank slate of being, which is continuously showing its presence to us in the form of new foundations being built by our will, and desire. The combination of will, and desire, bring forth a powerful combination whereby the individual is able to reconstruct themselves fundamentally.

There is a bountiful experience to be found in exploring the subconscious mind. Within the subconscious, there is a space whereby the individual can gain fresh perspectives on objective experiences. The dream-like experiences that we alone can go through often provide clues whereby we can individually learn the responsibility of self-expanding liberty through the limited expression of the will available to us.

Emptiness begins through a reckoning with the self that is forced into reality through the will of the individual. It is here where there is destruction on a mental level that precedes the traumatic changes an individual goes through because of said emptiness. True emptiness is a state of non-being, and can be found through some meditative states as well as through death itself. It is highly dangerous, of course, to assume that the self-destruction of the concept of self, and being, is without consequence. What we choose to do with our lives is reflected in the consequences brought forth onto us as a result of our actions. These actions extend to the self as well, because from a minimalist moral point of view, the construction of the self is paramount as a right that the individual possesses.

The process of dying, from an objective point of view, is both physically and mentally experienced. It is the place whereby we are forced to contend with the loss of our faculties. This is a horrifying prospect for many because it signifies the beginning of permanence in non-being. This permanence is relative to consciousness being dispersed, and the body undergoing the dying process. It is here that we become fully human because we are in the midst of the most profound experience we will ever have.

When we think about the inevitable future dying experience we will go through, there are many ideas that cross our head. What will we think about when we are going through our last conscious moments? How long will these moments last, at least in our perception of them? These are questions that have no easy answers because we still do not know the extent of how consciousness interacts with time in the dying process.

There is no mercy in death, and this is visible through the myriads of ways that we can pass on. Even in the most peaceful of scenarios, there is a cloud of darkness that descends upon the individual (figuratively, of course). This cloud of darkness is represented by regrets, memories, transitory thoughts, and the fear of the moment passing us by. All time becomes suspended in a way, even though it objectively passes by, because the subconscious is experiencing everything in slow motion.

Death brings with it a collective fear that is not always healthily addressed. We are mostly creatures of habit that do not understand readily those unique moments in time when we have no control over our situation at hand. Starting with the individual we see the important of death awareness from the moment we are cognitively aware of our mortality.

It is in those periods of time in our development when we are not fully matured on a mental level that we see through seemingly innocent eyes the truth of death. It is a mysterious manifestation of causal reality that will forever inspire art, science, and philosophy in a profound way. Death brings to us a myriad of questions; few of which have answers.

What can be objectively known is important in the grounding of our conceptualizations of being, but it also must be supplemented by the unconscious aspects of the mind. It is through the unconscious that we find ourselves contending with an inner battle for self-redemption. This self-redemption is based on the unconscious desire for a form of perfection that can never be. It maintains us as we are in a never-ending loop of insanity. Human beings are very easily led into believing that they need some form of salvation, redemption, or fundamental change on some form of spiritual level.

When we look deeply into our psyche, we may find that there is an overwhelming void that transfixes us in a state of pure shock from which there is no return. This shock penetrates the very heart of our being because it is focused on the conceptualization that we are ultimately from a state of non-being. This state is a condition that we will return to, and this is learned of through the earliest shocks to our psyche from childhood.

The unconscious teaches us about how to process the objective in a way that does not destroy us. It eventually will destroy us, but we have a temporary way through conscious action to listen to the unconscious mind. This temporality is present with us throughout life, and even though it may seem to be eternal is extant only for a glimpse of time. When we are in this moment of time we feel as if we can see the world from an impartial point of view, but we are never able to do so.

Our ultimate teacher will be death, but in the interim our unconscious paves the way toward understanding. Our very dreams are portents of change that occurs in our lives, even if it is on a symbolic level. The symbols that we are focused on here relate to a sort of Dadaist interlude between the conscious, and unconscious mind. Whether we are dreaming that we are falling down a flight of stairs, losing our teeth, or simply interacting with people we may have never met, all these aspects of the dream state are necessary to observe reality from a multiangled point of view. It is from this point of view, from these aspects in time, that we can visualize objective reality from a more nuanced angle.

A reliance on the physical, as well as the mental, in the case of the reintegration of the self, is important for the individual to maintain a sense of balance on a fundamental level. Without the basis for a foundation of both aspects of being there is only chaos. What I mean by this is that there is no way for there to be true growth without seeing the world from both a physical, as well as mental stance. When there is a reintegration of the self, there is a new foundation that is created due to the power of the will.

The will is strong, but can be humbled in the sense that there are limitations that exist in the ability to express desires. In my previous work, *Essay on the Limitations of Free Will*, I discussed at length the various limitations as they are associated with both physical desires, as well as the ever-changing Will. We must associate the will with the vast abyss of thoughts that cross our consciousness through those states which are akin to dreaming. When we do this, we are actively choosing to associate our objective view of the world with the internal values of the subconscious mind.

In desire there is a transfixion on making a reality out of ideas, thoughts, and conceptualizations. This transfixion crosses our path when we reach into the most primal aspect of the will. In this primitive state, we are closer to the truth about human behavior than when we are detached, and viewing things from a clinical viewpoint alone. The reason for this is that we cannot escape the subjective, nor can we eradicate the subconscious experience of life as we live it. There must always be some form of awareness cultivated regarding death consciousness for there to be a true chance for personal growth.

Nothing except death can teach us the ultimate value of our actions in this world. We can only make assumptions about our actions based on how it affects others, and ultimately ourselves. Of course, we can base our ideas on what we have learned about appropriate behavior, as well as our own insight into things but we need to have an eye turned inward facing death. It is from this basis that we can cultivate a new sort of consciousness within ourselves that is focused on more than just the temporal.

It is within the subjective that we are determined to add a personal note to that which is not uniquely our own, namely our lives. We think that we have some control over what we own about ourselves, but the very thought of this self-ownership is illusory at best. This is because we know that we can make decisions based on whatever criteria are before us (namely restrictions on our will), and we continuously act upon this. In the end, however, we will quickly see that we do not have sufficient control over our lives as we would like to think.

Reflecting on the unconscious allows us to view each moment with a unique clarity that cannot be expressed with mere words. Our comprehension of language is not sufficient for there to be an expression of those experiences which are uniquely individual to the construct of the self. The construct I am speaking of here is of our own devising, and it continues to haunt us throughout our lives unless we recognize it for what it is; a mere ruse whereby we are enslaved to this world.

Through the will we are brought closer to a vision of a reconstructed personality for ourselves. This reconstructed personality is created from the figurative ashes of the mental death of an individual. Whether we die on a mental level, figuratively speaking, or on a physical level (in the causal), we are amid profound events that should not be taken for granted by those who are observers.

Within each one of us there is space for a change that is profound enough to lay claim on our prior foundations. Conceptualizations are unique to the individual, even though all of humanity has shared concepts, ideals, and observations. We can only experience our own unique vision of life, even though we know that there are causal, and objective realities streaming all around us. We are continuously bending to the callous machinations of a chaotic world, with very little that we can do to avoid this madness. Our inventions for staving off the void are tremendously devised, and meticulously placed out in the world for us to interact with so that we might not be totally frightened of death as a manifested truth. These inventions, of course, can only provide temporal relief.

The objective grounds us in a way that allows us to see the logical, rather than the irrational that often follows the subjective. Of course, there is a reverse truth about this as well. The subjective keeps us on the edge between madness, and industriousness of being. When we dream, we are attempting to make sense of the often-nonsensical world around us. The physical world is brought before us on a daily basis, because we as causal entities must interact with the world as it is. Still, our subconscious continuously processes the objective in a manner that can only be experienced by the individual alone. Therefore, we are entirely alone in this world because of the subjective.

From the objective there comes a realization that all truths are processed by the mind in a unique way. We can learn of causal, physical laws, and mathematical exactness through formal education, but there is always room in the subconscious for the processing of this information in a specific way unique to the individual. This uniqueness cannot, as previously stated, be replicated in any meaningful way which further isolates us from the outside world.

Truth proceeds from the awareness that we are ultimately nothing more than dust. All living beings experience the truth through the dying experience, inclusive of human beings. This much has been established. These things are also objectively true, because we know how biology works, and are aware of our future deaths in the physical world. Nonetheless, we are tied down by the subjective because we are in continuous conflict between what we perceive, and what we know to be real based on mutually agreed upon truths.

None of us, regrettably, will be able to return from whence we will go into the dying process, but we can learn from others who have passed. We know of those physical processes we can observe in the deceased, such as sunken eyes, or discolorations which appear before us. These visceral observations are quite succinct in that they are bluntly available for us to see for ourselves, should we decide to look. What we learn is that decay comes for all of us, and it must be accepted in a humble way.

Morality, in terms of personally held ethical beliefs, can be seen in the expression of the objective, as well as subjective. We are culturally, and socially, impelled to follow a set of very clearly defined moral expectations for us. Internally, we have access to a fantastical world that is often vague, and unclear when it comes to ethical, or moral barriers.

What is the truth? The truth is the physical world around us, processed by the inner mind through complex thought, ideal, and reasoning. In addition to this, our subjective mind holds some form of nebulous truth that we cannot fully grasp yet. Perhaps this is because the subjective mind is immaterial, acausal, and not of a physical form where it can be scrutinized the same as objective things can.

We can, through neuroscience, access brainwaves, as well as produce brain imaging technologies that allow us to better understand behavior. Still, we have a long way to go until we can understand the subconscious motivations of behavior on a fully advanced level. Because of this, we still have room for imagination regarding the subconscious mind, and some aspects of motivation in general from an abstract viewpoint.

Logic can bring us closer to the truth of death, even though there are some limitations to this as well. No matter how much we ground ourselves in the objective world, we are continuously prodded by the subjective to process what we experience in a unique way.

When we use reason to discover the truth about our mortality, we are also shaping a powerful force of change in our lives simultaneously. Grief, and morality share much in common, and this is so because there are intersectional similarities between the two aspects of being (and non-being).

When grief overtakes an individual, there is a powerful cross-section that is created by the conscious, as well as unconscious mind simultaneously. The individual must contend with the physical aspects of a death, and at the same time process it in an emotional, and personal way.

Death can be viewed as both a biological process, as well as a mental process of which we have very little information other than anecdotal experiences from those who have reportedly experienced the dying process. There is an expression of art to be found in the way that human beings often choose to showcase their own understanding of death.

Creativity has a place within the realm of conceptualizing one's own demise. We can think of our own deaths by meditation upon them at any given time, and this is something that we should do if we are to mature in any significant way. I encourage anyone to meditate upon death, because in my observation it simultaneously seems to have an effect of amplifying empathy towards others.

In the Autumn of our lives, when we are forced more directly to confront death, we have a choice to either let it consume us, or empower us. This choice is found in each one of us as something that is uniquely emboldening. There is inspiration to be found within self-annihilation because there is a possibility for the creation of a new way of being. What I mean by this is that there is the concept of mental death whereby the individual chooses to re-create a new form of being, and adherence to a new self.

If we are to choose a dignified death, then we need to be aware of the necessity to mentally let go of concepts and dogmas that shackle us from perceiving the truth. What we think we know about the world from cultural education is nothing but a shadow of what we must learn about our own lives, and the process of dying.

We grow fond of those cultural artefacts that hold familiarity to us because we fear the unknown. It is through the unknown, or unaware states of mind, that the individual can come to perceive the strength of change required to push forward through one's own experience of grief. With our expression of grief, we come to learn that there are many shades of grey, so to speak, when it comes to our understanding of death, and how it influences our subconsciousness.

Without a sense of openness toward the finiteness of our existence, at least from a psychological standpoint, we cannot grow in a manner that is representative of wholeness in self-willed existence. Returning to the concept of art, whether there is an expression in film, painting, writing, or music, there is always a link to death in each one of these mediums.

The sunset cast over a beautiful lake, the smile of another, a warm embrace, or some other positive experience is made more intense by the awareness of death. These experiences clearly demonstrate that the death impulse is not negative whatsoever, and is necessarily intertwined with the primitive desire to survive. Our survival brings with it a sense of wisdom that can only be described as profound experience.

We are impelled toward our own deaths in some subconscious way, whether it be slowly through our lifestyle or behavior, or quickly by means of more drastic action. Both aspects of how we are motivated by death are often not intentionally thought upon critically on a conscious level. These aspects simply exist, and are expressed by the individual in the form of actionable behavior.

In the realm of the psychological, we can see that it is not decline that brings us to the balanced understanding of death, but the empowerment we gain from the knowledge of it through life experience. The closer we get to our own natural deaths through old age brings with it a sense of wisdom, should the individual decide at an earlier age to have examined death diligently. Through this diligence we find ourselves at a further crossroads of being in which the individual is forced to embrace their own mortality.

There is serenity to be found in our understanding of mortality, and it does not involve necessarily any idea or conceptualization of the spiritual. This serenity is found through the molding of the objective knowledge of the world to the subjective experience of the individual. There is balance to be found here, and it coincides with both the death impulse, as well as the desire to survive.

Death teaches us in ways that are often expressed from a scientific, as well as personalized conceptualization of it. What we learn from either aspect of the process of death is up to us. Our minds can be molded by the outside world, but ultimately it is our internal world that is chosen by us (at least to a degree). Our knowledge grows, of course, with educational study, but this is something that is only one facet of learning. We must also educate ourselves on the fact that we will never know all there is to know about life. Some things are indeed a mystery, and likely always will be.

When we study anatomy, and physiology, we are learning the science of the body, but also gain an important insight into ourselves. This insight is built upon scientific inquiry, as well as a dependence on logic, and facts. Following this mindset allows the individual to ground themselves in the objective, while opening a space for further dialogue, or discussion regarding the subjective experience. Wisdom can be found through medical texts, philosophical works, and the expression of the arts all coupled with a nuanced understanding of subjectivism.

Through the subjective we come to a more colorful insight into our own personal inner world. This insight is built upon the foundation of being which is chosen consciously by the individual. In other words, we have a choice to erase all semblance of who we once were through a psychological death. The death of the self, on a psychological level, does not imply some form of transcendence or mysticism of any kind. What I am stating here is simply that the construct of self, and being is able to be destroyed by the individual through mental annihilation.

Insight brings us closer to a psychological maturity which does not depend solely on learned behavior, environmental considerations, or the age of an individual. We gain insight into things when we experience the subjective in a way that is as intense as the objective is. When we place labels on the objectively known, we also label those counterparts that are found in the abstractions of the mind. This is something that is called anchoring, because the intent here is to align the mind with some conceptualization of life having some inherent sense to it.

Chapter Eight

The Dichotomies of Life Discussed at Length.

Dichotomies that are presented to us in life dictate our positions in the world from a psychological, and sociological standpoint. The psychological keeps us aware of the emotional, behavioral, and mental aspects of where we are as individuals in the world. In addition, the sociological aspect of these dichotomies becomes manifest through mentation on physical, and cultural positioning that we find ourselves in within the objective world.

The psychological aspect of situational dichotomies involves a deep dive into what makes us human. Our emotional regulation allows for there to be a genuine dialogue with others in the outside world regarding our own subjective vision of what makes us individuals. This regulation is specific to each one of us, because it is based on the conceptualization that how we interact with others affects our personal perception of the world.

Sociologically we are tied to one another in a way that colors even our subjective understanding of the world around us. It is through this world, and the knowledge we gain from it, that we can mend the various dichotomies that exist between society, and the individual. Nothing can stand in the way of one who is certain of the necessity of the recreation of the personality through mental destruction. This is a dangerous proposition, because it forces the individual to completely discard one's own prior sense of being.

The sense of being we are born with, have been nurtured with, and continue to exist under is now in a position of harrowing scrutiny. There is a moral question here that involves whether or not it is ethical to consider this form of self-destruction as being positive for the individual. In my estimation, it is ethical, and wholly moral, because it is the individual that must be considered first, and foremost.

The influence of the outside world on our formation is focused directly on all aspects of our conscious, as well as unconscious mind. Everything we experience is a continuum of education that is passed down from seemingly endless generations regarding the sense of being. It is in this sense of being that the self is constructed artificially throughout time since birth.

The unconscious mind is continuously active during our lives, and this is especially so when we experience anything at all. Nothing escapes the subconscious, because everything we experience at any given time is subjected to it actively. Our primitive tendencies to become possessed by impulse allows us to see more intimately exactly what I am talking about here. We are often subject to our impulses, which spring from the will, and it is here that we find ourselves enslaved further into the objective world.

We are socialized in this world to behave in a specific way, to understand the rules surrounding social norms, and to construct a personality out of a myriad of influences inclusive of subjective ones. There is a specious sense of self because everything is to be put to question at some point in time. We are not the same person we were yesterday, or even a moment ago. Time, of course, has a play in this, but it is also impulse which brings us to this point.

All that we experience is a powerful reminder of our mortality, because through each experience we learn more about ourselves. Our consciousness is often precariously balanced between a fulcrum of sanity, and insanity. Our logical minds prevent us from experiencing the depths of insanity, although this is through a superficial veil that guides us throughout life in an often-illusory way. If we were to learn too much about our true nature, we would need to be medicated in some way, I would expect. We are like shattered porcelain that is repaired through effort alone, and often in an imperfect way. Our humanity reflects this comparison because we are destined to be always imperfect on an objective, and subjective level. Our wounds do not always show, but they are, nonetheless, the same wounds we are used to experiencing altogether.

We are subjected to the pain, as well as the pleasure that this world has to offer, and not in equal measure. When we reflect, like Schopenhauer, on the suffering of the world, it is wise to think of the wild ravages of nature where animals, and even plants, strangle the resources of the world around us. All creation is subject to destruction, and to act upon the world both in a beneficial as well as harmful way.

The suffering we experience is long lasting in the sense that it influences, and colors all that we do, and think. When we experience suffering, we are not thinking about those times when we had an abundance of pleasure. We are only concentrating on the pain we are experiencing at that very moment. Perhaps it is with pain, and other modes of suffering, that we are truly liberated because we are forced to be fully present in the moment. Contrary to what Eastern mystics might say, it is possible that total stillness is the ultimate in suffering, at least for humans. When we think about it, it makes sense because we are forced to think about pure grief, and our own frailty in those moments.

When we experience pleasure there is a momentary lapse in awareness of the imminence of suffering in our lives. This lapse is illusory, and we sometimes think that it lasts much longer than it does in actuality. Our thirst for pleasure keeps us surviving a world of insanity, and grief, even though part of us knows better than to desire such things. This part of us, which is rational, allows us to better understand, and see exactly what it is that is causing our suffering. Once we can see the cause of our suffering, we soon realize that it is our very lives, and unique experience of sentience which is the root cause of our pain.

The death impulse charges us with a responsibility toward the constructed self, in that our foundations must be based on a balanced understanding of the objective, and subjective. The dichotomy between pleasure, and pain is succinct, but is often marred, and muddled by the illusions that pleasure brings. As mentioned, this illusion gives us the impression of durability, even though it is often experienced in small intervals between pain.

Regardless of our socio-economic position, death touches us all in a profound way. We experience death at times through the viewing of a passing hearse, or a visitation at a funeral, or even perhaps by watching the news and learning of the death of someone in our own neighborhoods. Death is all around us. It consumes us in a way that is not readily apparent, as I have explained prior, because it is subtly always before us in the back of our minds. We wish wholeheartedly to deny its existence, unless of course we have some pathological condition that forces us to mentally prepare for its eventual passing.

From the foundations that are built for us, either through effort or circumstance, we are bound to whatever befalls us in the objective world. We have some control over our destiny depending on the resources provided to us, but we cannot control fully just how we experience the world around us. Objectivity demands that we conform to those facts which bind us to this world on a fundamental level.

There are circumstances that can be changed through a combination of environment, effort, and personal talent, but ultimately, we must succumb to death. In death we learn of the value of being present in the moment, as if time were of no concern. What I mean by this is that because time has no place in the state of non-being, our embrace of timelessness goes hand in hand with being continuously present. This brings us back to the theory that total silence, and concentration bring with it the most exquisitely horrific pain we can possibly experience. Total silence is our gateway toward reflecting on things which we would rather *ignore*.

It is here, in this life, that we are surrounded by those things which we would rather not see. This much can be observed by the sheltering of information from both adults, and children when it comes to viscerally difficult images, video, or display of those who have died in some way. We have zero control over whether we contemplate on death in the end, because this aspect of the human experience is forced upon us through the machinations of our own consciousness in silence.

In the ultimate moments of life, we must decide whether we will resign ourselves to the experience or fight it until we can no longer physically or mentally do so. It would be much easier for us if we were to ahead of time resign ourselves to the coming pangs of death beforehand. This is not to say that the dying experience won't be somehow transformative, and profound in, and of itself. It certainly is, because it is through the dying process that we are reunited with all the constructs we have built for ourselves in this life.

The dying experience will serve to provide a full-stop in the life of an individual. Moments will replay themselves, and time will stretch into our delirium. We do not know what it feels like to objectively die and be aware of time because of course we do not have a closed scientific way of verifying this as a universal objective experience or no (at least currently). The second problem here is that there is the fact that the individual must die, and therefore cannot report on their condition afterwards.

In pleasurable experiences, the individual is somehow aware of the time passing by, if only from an unconscious aspect. Time brings with it an awful anxiety, as well as physiological, and psychological changes to the individual. These changes are so gradual that we do not immediately see them, but with the passing of years, and decades, these things become succinctly real to each one of us.

Suffering builds a tremendous wall of strength between the individual, and the outside world. It also crumbles our foundations in such a profound way as to nearly destroy us in the process as well. The dichotomies of life are numerous, and this is evident in environmental, psychological, and interpersonal aspects of modern living. Our post-modern society has shown itself to be hostile to the meditation upon death, which is a necessity for true emotional well-being within the individual. Time exists with fundamental laws but at the same time is strange to us because we are never fully mature enough to go through each stage of life with the necessary insight into death awareness, as well as aging. We all must pass through these experiences, whether we like it or not.

Inequalities in society are reflections of the imbalance of life on a fundamental level. There is no such thing as equity when it comes to nature, as it is something which is conceptualized in the mind of modern man as an exclusive phenomenon of consciousness. This is not to say that equity is not a meaningful concept, but it is one that is manifested from human logic, and reason rather than nature itself. We are constantly waging an inner war within ourselves regarding the primitive desires we harbor, as well as those of selflessness, and egalitarianism.

Our foundations are built upon the suffering of others in a multifarious way. From the clothing we wear to the food that we eat; we do not realize the many levels of suffering that have come to take place so that we may live well-off (relatively). We can only imagine the lengths of suffering an individual can go through, but we are forced to contend with our own pain daily. Sometimes the human spirit is *stronger* than is conventionally accepted, other times it is as weak as a droplet of rain.

The dying, and those who have embraced their own emptiness, have something in common; that of transcending beyond the construct of the self. There are still personal interests to contend with, but these end up being more meaningful, and less inward facing as those with the fortune (or misfortune) to continue on living, at least in many cases. Those who have gone through the emptiness of depression, or the grief that comes with losing something also are aware of this commonality, though it cannot be divulged with common language.

Empty though we are, there is something profound to be discovered through the experience of human life. This discovery is often based on the constructive building up of the sense of being to include that which is beneficial to as many people as possible. The conceptualization of Being is an enigma because it is based on what we know of biology, as well as our perception of consciousness on an active level. This combination of aspects is crucial to the fullness of understanding necessary for us to manifest our abilities, and talents as individuals in this world.

As we experience the imbalance between suffering, and pleasure in this world, we then can come to realize that it is through death that we blossom into our true natures; namely that of temporal creatures destined for the grave. We are both repulsed, as well as fascinated by the processes which accompany death, and for good reason; we have within us the impulse to live, as well as die. These impulses are primal, and hard to define, but they are specifically tied to our human natures.

Ultimately, it is through our obstinance toward survival that we will eventually be undone. We can only defraud ourselves for so long in the mire of mental gymnastics preventing us from seeing the truth. When we focus only on the principles of living, we ignore those of death, and the important lessons it must teach us. Every wrinkle we ignore, every infirmity of mind or flesh we casually brush off, and every self-delusion eventually must come undone by way of logic. Being forced to see ourselves in the mirror as aging time slaves is not an easy experience.

From a primitive aspect, we are attached to the rites of death through our everyday mundane experiences. We know that our actions eventually lead to our death because that is the natural order of things. There are many things in this world that can cause us to lose our lives in some freak occurrence, inclusive of the food that we eat, to the prescribed medications that we consume. The more we learn from a scientific angle, through trial, and error, as well as controlled studies, the more we realize that we are slowly poisoning ourselves through many of the items that we consume. Our ignorance of whether or not something like this is happening to us leads us to experience life as a game of chance with few options open to the will of the individual.

In conclusion, it is through the death principle that we find a balance between what we know, and the unknown. The objective, and subjective world is dichotomous in the sense that we experience both in describable, as well as indescribable ways. Art can teach us the extent of our subjective experiences by manifesting itself through a physical, tangible form. It is through the death impulse that we have the strength to recreate ourselves.

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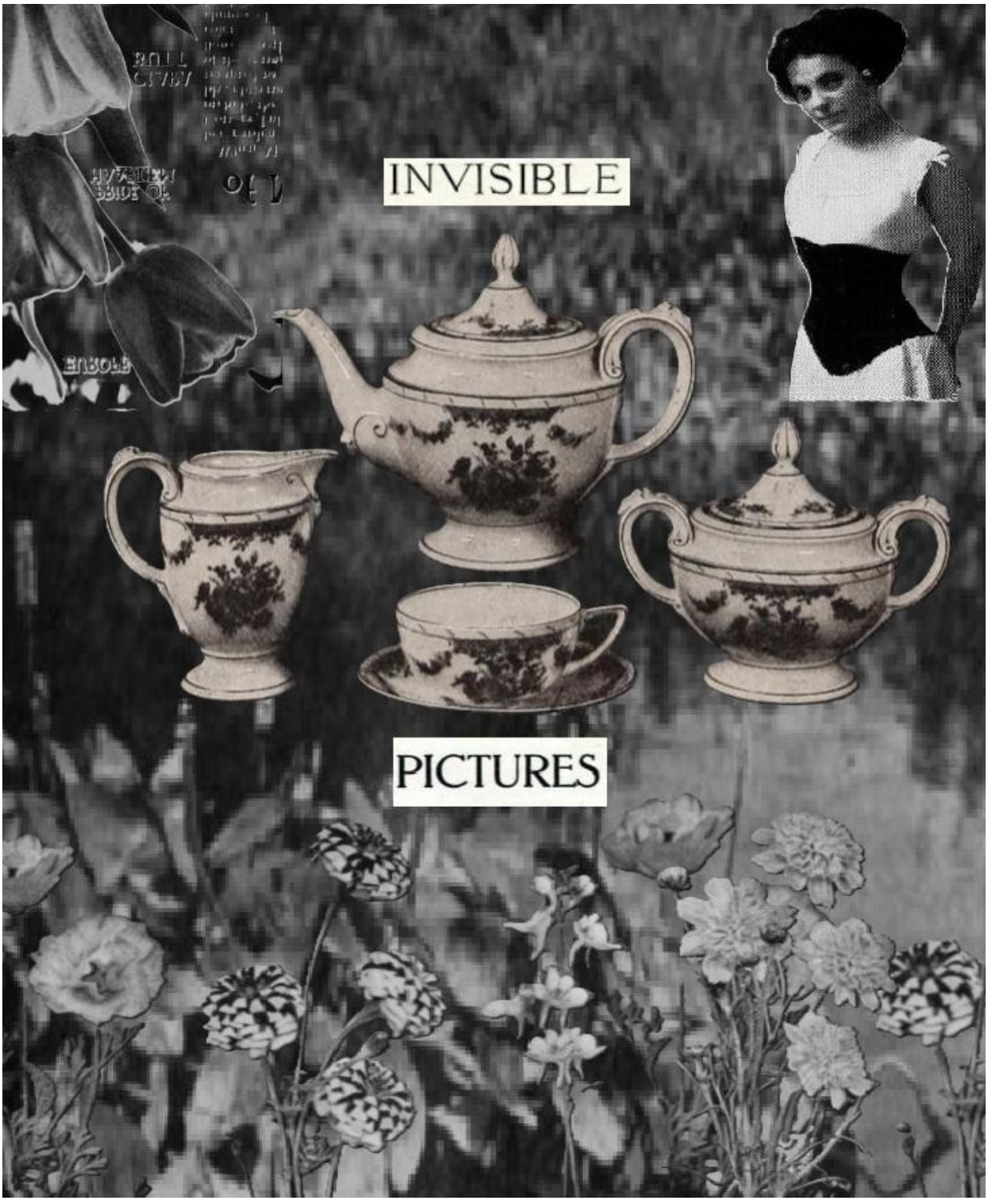
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Essay on the Void of Non-Being

Preface

The void of non-being stands before us even as we live our lives as normal. There is nothing we can do to stop the constant march of time, aging, and the realities of our eventual deaths. In the world as it is, there is a culture of death denial which is truly unhealthy. It is true that there are more conversations being had regarding death, human rights, and individual liberties, but this is something that is still in serious contention around the world. In truth, we are eventually going to succumb to death at some point, and it would be better if we were to admit this to ourselves.

We can only imagine what it would be like to be dead. Death, being an aspect of reality that is unique to biological life, teaches us through the process of dying. Non-being is not really a state, unlike other experiences we go through in life. It is something altogether mysterious because it is a concept that is so abstract that we can hardly understand what it ultimately means for us. True oblivion, if this is our lot in our existence, is so incredibly symbolic in nature that we can only speculate what it might represent.

The void calls out to us in ways that are hidden within the primitive aspects of the mind. Symbolism, idealism, and conceptualization all provide the basis for our construction of the realities of what lies beyond death. As I have mentioned in my previous works, the death impulse is one of those tools that we as humans utilize to grasp such concepts in a beneficial way. No one can quite anticipate what the void of non-being is like. It could be a positioning of destruction that starts with our deaths, and ends with the dissolution of consciousness. If consciousness is totally destroyed by the experience of death, then there is nothing to our speculation other than imagination.

The customs, and traditions around the world attest to the focus on dying, and death that precedes the phenomena of non-being. There is an ancient fear of death that still exists in us on a subconscious level. From

primitive times, mankind has shown a fear towards death on a physical level associated with the presence of the dead body. According to author E. Bendann, in their work *Death Customs: An Analytical Study of Burial Rites*, "The very awfulness of contact with a dead body makes one show respect and reverence to the departed and to perform acts of service to propitiate the ghost."

Bendann goes on to state that "The universal attitude toward the corpse is mystical and supernatural, and the contact from it is alarming. Not only do we find this emphasized in the Iranic Sacred Books, in the Old Testament, among the Grecians and Romans, but wherever we turn we see society replete with examples of this conception." This statement is in line with the conceptualization that the alarming reaction towards a corpse is generally a universal one.

Our attitude towards death dictates how we will approach it when it is our turn to experience it. If we have lived our lives in accordance with the concept that we have maximized our own freedoms, then we can pass away in relative peace. On the other hand, if there was never any sort of introspection during life regarding the mysteries of the dying process, it is more likely that the individual will experience a greater sense of fear of the unknown. Time unfortunately is not at our side, but still, we can contemplate the mysteries surrounding death in a mature way throughout our lives.

Even though we may find ourselves approaching a familiarity with death, it is still a mysterious phenomenon to us. We can of course focus on the biological facts regarding death on a physical level, but we still do not know where consciousness goes (if it goes anywhere) after death takes us. It is assumed that we go nowhere, and that our conceptualization of the self is but a mirage in the wake of the truth about death. This may be the case, but it may also be true that consciousness extends beyond the grave.

Our reaction towards the dead is indicative of how our primitive unconscious mind interprets the dying experience. We subconsciously are

very close to death because it is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. We are always close to death, and it is because of this that we find ourselves curious about our place in the universe on a macro level. Even though we cannot do anything except for speculate on what might occur after death, it is a useful exercise nonetheless because any of these might be possibilities of an undiscovered reality. What I mean by this is that there are so many possible truths out in the universe that even though it is impossible to know the fundamental nature of death beyond biological processes, it is worthwhile to speculate about it for our own sanity's sake.

To meditate on the void, there is a profundity of experience which cannot be replicated in any way. This profundity is built from the ground up in a foundational sense by the individual, and society as a whole. Though society does not often look at death with an honest eye, it still serves a purpose in our journey towards understanding the nature of it all.

The acausal, as well as the causal, are simultaneous concepts that are represented by not only the symbolic, but the very essence of what it means to be human. The uncreated abyss that often feels so close to us, but so far away due to it not being physically detectable, is representative of this symbolism because that is the only way it can be expressed beyond the brute nature of language.

Returning to the concept of non-being, let us consider that it is possible to experience this aspect of reality, at least to a degree, through active dissociation on the part of the individual. When we actively ignore those constructs which make up who we are through the dissociative process, we lose the sense of self, and being which is foundationally physical only. To clarify further, what I mean is that there is a profound ability within each of us to slough off, as it were, the foundations of perception which have guided us throughout the entirety of life. Mental illness lends itself toward this sort of introspection because there is often a sort of deep desperation towards meaning that is not always expressed by the average person.

The focus we should have is upon the transparency found in the meditation upon death. By doing so, we come closer to the authenticity that manifests itself as being a uniquely human trait resulting from consciousness itself. Everything we experience has its opposite in the realm of non-being. This is a difficult concept to wrap one's head around simply because we do not know the totality of what non-being might consist of if it does consist of anything. By recognizing that we do not have all the answers, we concede that there may be something to the concept of the near-death experience as well.

Those who experience death either through being in the presence of a loved one who has passed away, or through a near-death encounter, both have a profound understanding of the edge of consciousness. In our world, there is a focus on logic, and reason, both of which are necessary for survival and understanding of the truth. At the edge of consciousness is where we discover that there are more mysteries to the concept of dying than we initially may have supposed.

Poul Bjerre, the author of *Death and Renewal*, states that "There came a day when the void was filled, when silence quickened into life, and when the word "you" acquired a meaning, not as though someone had tried to interpret my nature in words, and still less as though someone had met me to deliver me from evil. As when eternity began to quicken into life, so the silence in which everything that belongs to eternity is born and dies was filled with the gladness and warmth of life." For Bjerre, there is a profound moment of self-realization that life offers at least a temporary solution to the void that appears before us. We will eventually be consumed by that void, but not until we, through silence, discover the purpose behind our relationships with others. When we are mature enough to realize that we are intimately connected with dying on a fundamental level, we can then bridge the gap between searching for meaning, and the acceptance of our eventual demise.

Our relationships we form with others determines how we will approach death in our final days. Everything we process in our lives is

based on a complex interaction between what we have learned growing up, as well as our inner worlds. Nothing that we experience can be seen as ultimately valuable except those emotional connections that we make during our lives. It is through these connections that we find ourselves coming closer to the idea that somehow, we are all united in death. This unity is not one in which the individual immediately loses their sense of self, but this is something that happens gradually over time leading up to one's death.

By looking introspectively, we are putting together a puzzle that is difficult to solve, and is missing pieces. This puzzle, otherwise known as life, resolves itself in the great mystery of the dying experience. As mentioned before many times, it is possible to know every aspect of biological truth that is presented through education, but it is impossible to know what happens after death. Therefore, we must continue to speculate, and focus on several theories that hold possibilities based on logic, and reason.

There is a mystery to this life that perhaps can be resolved in the experience of death even if we can only hypothesize what that might involve. I will be exploring throughout this current work the possibilities that exist, as well as the rationale behind each one of these theories. The first theory deals with the possibility that we will eventually die, and end up in the abyss of non-being. The second theory focuses directly on the possibility that consciousness may continue to exist in some nebulous way. The third, and final theory is that all matter is subject to some form of eventual dissolution into the eternity of biological death whereby an essence that preceded all of creation eventually came into being as matter with the sole purpose of starting this dissolution. It is through these three primary theories that I will also be concentrating heavily upon their implications upon us all as human beings. For example, I will be dissecting each one of these theories in order to better understand their logical endings.

Traditional religions, belief systems, and ideals do not adequately answer what may lie beyond our current existence. Conjecture only causes grief, but there is no other way to live other than through such speculation. There is an internal continuous struggle within each one of us to find purpose, and meaning in this life, and this is evident throughout the numerous examples of history, and religious faith. But it is through faith that sometimes we lose our abilities to reason properly, and this is why I will not be concentrating on this aspect of the metaphysical.

Consciousness, being directly connected with our bodies on a biological level, could completely cease to exist after death. This is something we must simply accept, but at the same time we must also know that we cannot be certain of that being a reality either. Perhaps we are beholden to consciousness as a temporary phenomenon, or aspect of being, during our lives.

It is possible that consciousness fractures like broken glass does into smaller shards, and dissipates because of death. To clarify a bit further, let us say that consciousness still exists after death but becomes so unrecognizable that we cannot have a sense of self, or being when this happens. The very constructs that we build our lives on could shatter completely before us, and it could be that our sentience follows us after death but in a way that is wholly unrecognizable to us.

Another possibility is that consciousness simply transmutes into nothingness after a period, which would imply that it is simply an organization of neural networks that require the human brain to function at all. Perhaps consciousness exists for a short period, and then simply ceases to function at any level sometime after death.

The essence of non-being represents highly repressed fears of the unknown. It is a state of no-state, meaning that there is nothing that can be comprehended because there is nothing that exists. If this is the case then it is simply a fact of life that we must accept, but we will of course never

know for certain because of the barrier between the causal world, and acausal.

Mental states, such as depression, can teach us coping mechanisms for dealing with the fact that we do not know everything regarding consciousness. It is possible that these states are a feature, rather than an illness, in the sense that we are all able to experience them in various ways. Death, and the threat of dying, keeps us on the edge in such a way that although we are not always consciously obsessed about it, it is a reality that we must face at some point in time.

Non-being can also be representative of the unconscious mind. It is through the unconscious mind that we discover there are anomalies which are beyond our current understanding of how the universe works. The unconscious is not directly fully connected with the causal domain because of the fact that we can experience fantasies, and internal worlds which are quite different than the physical universe around us.

Non-being, or the void, can be of a similar core as the unconscious mind because of the idea that it is beyond our control, and outside of our general understanding. It is also possible that what we call the void is simply a space apart from the natural world around us, yet still has its own set of rules, and forms which cannot be directly perceived by us.

In the journey through the abstractions of life, we imagine what the void might be like. Our imagination is filled with possibilities, and therefore we also project these things into the physical world around us daily without being aware. The symbolic teaches us about how little we can articulate the abstractions relating to non-being. It is through the experience of death that we will eventually know the truth behind the matter, but let us continue to speculate regarding the nature of what might happen to us. There is also the possibility that we are a part of a grander scheme which is unknown to us in our current state.

Introduction

"What I call the void is where nothing exists. It is about things outside man's knowledge. Of course the void does not exist. By knowing what exists, you can know that which does not exist. That is the void."

— Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*.

We come from nothing, and we will possibly return to the nothingness that awaits us. This is the simple truth that we must respect in some way because at some point we will have to come to terms with it. The void, being encased in nothingness, and thus limitless, could be a temporary state between this universe, and another. The other possibility is that it is the all-encompassing truth that we must admit to through our obeisance to nature. There is a sort of mystery to the void that even the sciences admit to, and this is because of the lack of information we have regarding it.

When there is an honest communication between individuals, and groups of people that represent society regarding death, there can be an openness that allows us to confront the void with less fear. Though we cannot know what the void truly represents for us, we can imagine the possibilities through our unconsciousness. In the crossroads of this life, we are forced to ask questions regarding reality in some individual way.

Studying the biological facts surrounding death can assist in allaying fears of dying, but it still does not answer the fundamental questions regarding the continued existence (or absence of) consciousness. This is the most difficult part about understanding reality because consciousness is such a point of contention within scientific, and philosophical circles. Recognizing this allows us to be honest with ourselves, fundamentally.

Non-being can be likened to a womb of sorts which cradles the individual in its grasp tightly never to let go. It is an abstraction that can

never fully be understood, yet it compels us to think about various theories which could possibly be true. This is the only way to appease consciousness; to explore the unknown without even the hope of finding direct answers.

The dying experience is the closest we will ever come to the void on at least a partially conscious biological level. Our senses will dull, our pulse will weaken, and we will slip into that great unknown which lay before us waiting to devour all sense of being. This could be what happens to us, but consciousness may continue if it is some form of physical property that remains unified (or not).

Emptiness, found through mental states of breaking down the self, allows the individual to process the nature of the void through dangerous mental states of being. By this, I mean that through bouts of mental illness an individual can come close to the concept of the void by feeling a certain emptiness within.

We are all close to death through either direct experience (i.e. a near death experience) or through the loss of a loved one. Somehow, some way, death touches us, and keeps us to a degree aware of our own mortality. We may not always be cognizant of this actively due to various behaviors that run contrary to this knowledge, but our unconscious mind is always aware of this.

The self, being a construct, can easily be destroyed, thus granting us partial knowledge of the void. What I mean by this is that since we are taught to acknowledge an identity, we can cast that same identity off in a way that mirrors the actions of the void. In my last theoretical essay, entitled Essay on Self-Annihilation, I describe this form of destruction of the constructs of the self in terms of physical actions such as suicide. There is a correlation here between the will to die, and the desire to re-create the self in a way that is more beneficial to exploring the void.

Representations of non-being can be found through the symbolic nature of the unconscious mind. The focus on self-annihilation is not a

literal one, but there are correlations to the act of suicide simply because there is a destruction of the construct of the self which is involved here. As with all of my work, I make a very cautious statement to say that there is no encouragement whatsoever towards self-harm. Here there is a theoretical self-destruction which does not involve anything but a renewal of personal foundations in a rudderless world.

The unconscious mind is at the center of our journey into the states of oblivion that will someday overtake us. It is with the unconscious aspects of being that symbolism comes to the forefront, as well as abstract ways of thinking that influence our daily lives. Energy changes form, and we can perceive this through the stages of growth in our own lives. When we concentrate on the unconsciousness before us, we then are able to see the value of the abstractions our minds are capable of. This is where there is a great power that resides in the re-creation of the self through morbid proclivities, and thought patterns.

As we delve into the void through an enhanced perception found through meditation, we come close to our own future deaths. Every moment we spend on this form of meditation provides a tool for us to utilize in our personal journey towards growth. Growth, on a fundamental level, is necessary for us to calmly approach death in a way that will not be full of distress. If nothing else, we owe it to ourselves to utilize those tools which come through self-education so that we can look stoically upon death with courage in our hearts.

The biggest mystery of them all is consciousness. It is through sentience that we find ourselves in the midst of a great schism between the conscious mind, and the unconscious mind. The subjective, found through individual experience, provides a key to understanding the subconscious mind. In order for there to be a search for meaning, there must be a courageous form of self-sacrifice which allows for a sense of humility before the grandeur of death.

Symbolism is found within the subjective perceptions of the individual in question. This is a description of an inner world which though influenced by the causal, is nonetheless on the edge of the liminal. There are countless unique ideals, thoughts, identities, and emotions that are represented by the subconscious.

Without symbolism, there is no understanding of the void, or non-being, because traditional spoken language cannot suffice. What I mean by this is that there is a direct focus here on the abstract rather than the causal universe. The inner world of an individual is rich, varied, and completely unique in every way.

Communication by means of getting in touch with the subconscious mind allows for there to be a sense of growth within the individual. This growth is necessary for there to be a more mature understanding of the abstractions that are presented to us through the conceptualizations of the void. When we leave out our prejudices, and preconceived notions of the truth, we allow ourselves to become open to the possibilities before us concerning death.

This world, even if objectively viewed, can only be perceived through the lens of the intrapersonal, as well as subjective aspects of thought. We all know that there are various laws of physics that we must obey because we all experience these things the same way. There are numerous possibilities that exist for us as we experience the dying process, and only some of them can be explained at the moment.

Perhaps we are all destined for eternal death, with no consciousness to look forward to. This is a distinct possibility because without the workings of the brain to enact consciousness there could be nothing awaiting us but the eternal abyss of non-being. We must come to understand that what we know about the physical occurrences that precede death are just that; physical properties which can be explained by scientific means. We cannot fathom what might happen to consciousness after death, but we can at least try through theorizing.

Arthur Schopenhauer, in his work *Religion: A Dialogue and Other Essays* states that "The faculty for remembering is not diminished in proportion to what one has learnt, just as little as the number of moulds in which you cast sand, lessens its capacity for being cast in new moulds. In this sense the memory is bottomless." Our ability to tap into memory is limitless in a sense, and this is perhaps part of what qualifies as being able to decipher the nature of the void. It is possible that in the emptiness of non-being there are echoes of memories which replay themselves over, and over again separate from consciousness.

Our nature is such that we are eternally restless regarding the deeper questions of life. The will, being limited, is forced into action through the profundity of desire which is found from within the individual on an unconscious level. The unconscious psychological processes that we experience are reflected in our external personalities, though we sometimes are not certain just how this is so.

Life, being a puzzle, can only be fully solved through the experience of death. Once we are dead, then we will (or will not) know the truth of the matter concerning all of these theories. We cannot know what lies beyond the veil of death because we only have objective information about biological processes as we experience them. The subjective, being separated from the objective world of the causal, is found within the unconscious mind of the individual.

Understanding biological processes provides a way for the individual to grasp the physical causes of death, and thus mitigate any potential fear regarding it. This is beneficial for the individual because it allows for there to be a focus on the theoretical, as well as metaphysical. The psyche of the individual is geared to understanding survival, as well as the experience of the dying process through the loss of close family, and friends. There is a psychological benefit for the individual to view the deceased, especially when there is complex grief involved. By satisfying a primitive desire to experience closure, there is a powerful expression of humanity through the rites found in the average funeral.

For Schopenhauer, the will is such that it is the center of suffering. "But it is the will alone which is the fount of all our sorrows and sufferings, and if it thus vanishes from consciousness, the whole possibility of suffering is taken away." We are continuously driven by the primitive desires within us which emanate through to the will made flesh.

Our ability to suffer keeps us honest with ourselves, as well as those around us regarding our mortality. When we are honest with ourselves, we are then able to explore more clearly the world around us. Theorizing is one way that we are able to cope with the unknown, because it allows for intellectualization of internal emotional states in a positive way.

Though we are in fact destined for the grave, there is the power of the mind to fabricate all sorts of ideas regarding the hereafter. I remain atheistic, but I do think there is a possibility that some unintelligent force caused the big bang which may be connected to the acausal in some way. Like Philipp Mainländer, I entertain that the idea that the universe may be finite, and subject to eventual dissipation in some mysterious way. Perhaps all matter is the corpse of some theoretical god, and we are destined for the eternal abyss in the end of all things.

Our will is represented by the desire that is held deeply within each one of us. This desire is a powerful example of how we pine for eternal life, even though we do not, and cannot know the truth behind the matter. If some force is responsible for all matter, then it is quite possible that it came into existence as a singularity that expands with consciousness as a side effect prior to our eventual decay. To clarify, I mean that consciousness may play a minor role in the grand scheme of things.

When we suffer on an individual level, inclusive of psychological grief, we touch the void in a way that coincides with the power of the will towards death. This will is magnified through personal actions that affect the objective outside world. If everything eventually decays, then we are a strange anomaly considering that we possess consciousness which may be a temporary experience.

There is tremendous courage required to confront the void on a psychological level. Let us entertain for a moment that all that exists is some metaphysical corpse, and that we are destined for the abyss, whatever that might entail.

The world, as it is represented on an objective level, does not indicate the depths of how we will cross over to the state of non-being. The subjective mind is one way that the individual can explore this state, either through willed dissociation or meditation of some form. If there is an exploration through dissociation this is as close as one can come to the void due to there being a disruption in the concept of the self for a temporary moment.

The here, and now is representative of the void because there is no focus on the future or the past. We can only live in the present moment, even though we anticipate the future, and remember the past. It is in the present moment that we become closer to understanding the abyss of non-being. When we are cognizant of this idea, we can then move forward with our understanding of the world around us through the objective, and subjective states of being.

It is possible that we will never know what the void of nothingness has in store for us. This must be accepted. However, consciousness may continue to exist in those empty spaces where there are no present objects, or physical laws resembling our own. We may have to experience an eternity of blackness before us, with our consciousness present in every moment in some way. Another theory is that our consciousness will simply dissipate over time, and fragment into innumerable points of sentience.

Suffering is always present in this world, and it is through the reflection on the void that we can transcend physical, and mental pain. The pain that we experience in this world, outweighed by the pleasures we receive, is nonetheless not without merit. We do become stronger, and more resilient through trials, and tribulations, and this can be extended into the subjective mind through personal idealism, and emotional states.

Near death experiences can bring us closer to experiencing the humility necessary to grasp the concept of the beyond. We cannot rationally explain these experiences other than personal testimony, which is subjective in nature. Any sort of out-of-body experience can only be seen in terms of the subjective because it cannot be replicated in an objective way that is uniform in nature.

Words alone cannot suffice for the profundity of the concept of what might lie beyond this life. There may, as I have said, be a dissolution awaiting us, or we could experience consciousness without the constraints of the constructs we have built up for ourselves. Consciousness could also shatter to the point where there is no recognition of the self anymore, nor are there bodily reference points for it to reside in.

Within the unconscious mind, we have a hidden desire for oblivion which is pronounced in times of extreme suffering. This in no way negates the will to survive, but it certainly contends with it in a serious manner. Suffering brings us closer to the essence of non-being because it forces us to abandon intellectualizing for the primitive response of death awareness. When we experience suffering, we have the distinct realization that our awareness of the pain is profound enough to block outside influences such as other people around us. We realize the nature of being human as something that is tainted by loneliness through the realization of individual suffering.

When we meditate upon non-being, we are crossing out our own prejudices regarding death, and the void. This crossing is based on the conceptualization that there is power in the essence of the abyss that we can tap into on a primal level. There is a freedom to be found in letting go of any predetermined ideology regarding death, inclusive of faith itself. Though we are at the edge of death through the shortness of our lives, we must actively be aware that we could transcend this world in some form if consciousness continues to exist after we pass away. This is just as likely to happen as the prospect of descending into non-being through the abyss of nothingness.

Our obsession with life coincides with a subconscious curiosity regarding death. We are always at the edge of learning about the extent of consciousness, but cannot get past the subjective nature of it. This is the curse of sentience in that there is always a peripheral truth which cannot fully be experienced by the individual. The will, being strong, is still subjected to the laws of nature, as well as the restrictions placed upon it by society.

We are constantly searching for meaning, and purpose, but it is through meditation on the void that we see there is no direct sense of either. There has to be a re-creation of purpose through the individual will, and this is done through a symbolic self-annihilation through mental deconstruction of concepts.

The psyche is constantly inundated by the world around us, and we can only subjectively perceive these things for ourselves. We know that there are laws which we are beholden to, and this is evidenced through the objective world. Nonetheless, we can perceive through the subjective that we are perhaps more than we assume we are (at least on a physical level). Metaphysically, it is possible that we are bound to consciousness in a subjective way that continues after death. The way this might continue is of course a mystery, but it is very possible that all sense of self will be completely destroyed in the process.

Unconscious thoughts penetrate deeply into the heart of the symbolic, and its connection with death becomes readily apparent. We dream, think, symbolize, and tap into the primitive nature of our existence when we think on the unconscious. The psychological implications of doing this allow us to envision with greater clarity the various aspects of the dying process.

The symbolic maintains a strong grip on us through the subjective experience of inner thoughts. We can only imagine what the future holds in store for us, and this is inclusive of the experience of dying. When we look at symbols, we can interpret for ourselves the meaning behind them.

When we resolve to understand that death is an inevitable part of the human experience, we are then able to gaze into the void. This gaze involves looking honestly at death from a foundationless level which comes from the realization that all the constructs of being are fundamentally false.

Miyamoto Musashi, in his legendary work *The Book of Five Rings*, declared that it would be prudent to "think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world." This is a mystery in itself because it involves a mental deconstruction of the various impositions that society has placed upon us through the illusion of personality. For example, we are told that we have a specific nationality, are taught a specific language, and made to conform to standards of gender which are unrealistic.

If we resign ourselves to the fact that we are insignificant in the grand scheme of things, we can then utilize that humility to meditate more clearly on the abyss of non-being. As I have mentioned before, this abyss may possibly be an interim between this universe, and an inverse universe. Our laws of physics may not necessarily apply after the dissolution of consciousness through the abyss, but we may find ourselves in the midst of a great shift of being through experience.

Returning to the symbolic, we find ourselves in between the objective, and subjective worlds. Perhaps this is where our true matrix of reality exists; in between the objective, and subjective. We must build new foundations of the self in order to observe the truth more closely regarding life, and death. Beyond what we think we know lies a plethora of ideas, theories, and conceptualizations regarding the truth of the matter.

A balance must be struck between the conceptualization of the self, and the desire to understand the deeper things of life. What I mean by this is that it is necessary to attempt to build a new foundation based on the idea that what we have learned about ourselves is fundamentally flawed. If we were to take what we know about the world around us, and apply it to the subjective, it becomes very clear that there are layers to experience which are based on how we see things, as well as physical properties.

Chapter One

What Does the Void Represent?

Language is not enough to describe the absence of all things through the void. We must be willing to subject ourselves to the mysteries of the subconscious mind, particularly as we journey through this life each day. When we experience the world through the subjective, we learn that there are not only physical laws, but highly personal experiences that exist.

When we open ourselves intellectually, we can at least speculate what those spaces of emptiness beyond life hold for us. Perhaps there is a period of pure nothingness, and a re-emergence through the darkness into some other form of consciousness.

Our bodies will change into other matter after death, but we do not know what happens to consciousness. Consciousness, being a mystery, may possibly be a form of matter in some abstract way. If consciousness is required to understand the world around us, it must also be true that all that we learn about the world around us is the result of our sentience.

Metaphysically, we can speculate that there is a continuum between consciousness and the other side of death. This is something that is based on imagination, and looking deeply into the subconscious mind.

The absence of all things is found in the void, and this is evident by the opposing nature of life versus death. It is possible that there is something within the empty spaces of death, and this is due to the idea that we may experience survival after death in some vague way. Of course, this is merely one possibility out of many, but it is nonetheless just as likely as any other theory.

If there is no consciousness after death, then there is nothing to worry about. Nonetheless, let us entertain these possibilities, and theories, for they are just as likely as any other to be true in the end.

Consciousness, if it is a continuum independent of biological forces, perhaps disperses after death. There could be countless shattered aspects of consciousness that separate from any fundamental sense of self. In those shattered aspects, there may be separate individual worlds which are unique to that portion of consciousness maintained. If this all seems abstract, that is because it is.

It is conceivable that the void is a space of cleansing which is likened to an abyss of liminal purgation. This would mean that it is composed of something, if only consciousness. The spaces of symbolism which are thought of in our subconsciousness perhaps influence those spaces. This could mean that there is a world unique to each form of consciousness that finds itself crossing beyond the veil of death. If consciousness shatters into pieces like shards of glass, then somehow there are worlds beyond our understanding that each shard experiences independent of the whole.

The abyss is beyond our comprehension, and it could be a space whereby all notions of the self are completely destroyed. Consciousness could dissipate in such a way as to tear apart any construct that was part of the world of the individual prior to death. If this is the case, then there may be new constructs which could be created of reality in each of those shards of consciousness which remain.

Non-being is a complex subject, as well as an important aspect of human conceptualization because it represents the end of all we know. It also represents the power of death over us because we *are*, each one of us, beholden to its power. Let us assume that non-being is a representation of some sort of symbolism within our own subconsciousness. If this is the case, then it would make sense that our consciousness, should it survive death, is influenced by subjectivism primarily.

We are always searching for the ultimate purpose in life, and this is evidenced by the multitude of mythologies throughout the world. None of these mythologies can answer the fundamental questions that are burning

within us, because they represent a more primitive ideological foundation that does not hold up in post-modern society.

The essence of the self becomes irrelevant when considering how we process the world around us. What I mean by this is that it is clear that since all we know of the world is constructed for us, we must then translate our realization into reality through actively approaching death with an open mind.

When we observe the frail, elderly, and those who are actively suffering, we become aware of our insignificance. This is a normal reaction on a psychological level because it is a form of introspection that exists to help us see the world from a different perspective. It also forces us to look upon the world realistically, and admit that one day, we too shall be in those positions. Suffering, even in proximity (rather than through direct experience alone) keeps us aware of the fragility in our bodies.

We can only experience the world in a way that is highly individualistic and codependent upon the subjective nature of consciousness. We of course know that there are fundamental forces which we must be subjected to in this world on an objective level. This cannot be denied. The self, being a construct, is one of those concepts which becomes irrelevant in the face of death, as there are grander visions of the world than we could even imagine existing.

Consciousness keeps us grounded actively through the abstractions found in the unconscious mind. The subjective, being as important as the objective, is always present because we are after all individuals. We experience the world around us similarly, but process these experiences on a subjective level which is based on not only symbolism but deep emotion. This emotion is profound in that it directs everything from how we behave to how we respond to the world around us on an internal level.

Meditating upon emptiness allows us to experience in some small way the essence of the void. This essence is indescribable, but I will attempt to put words to paper, as it were, with respect to it. Let us imagine

that emptiness is as a degloving of our assumed nature, and that there is an aspect of pure nothingness whereby we are bound for a time to experience. If there is a degloving of our natures, then that means that all conceptualization of the self, learned aspects of the individual, as well as identity become irrelevant in this transitory of experiences for us as conscious beings.

We are always at the precipice of the death impulse because we are guided by desire within us towards survival and dying. These concepts I have described at length in prior works, but they are just as relevant in this present study on consciousness. Through our primitive natures we are propelled towards survival as well as death because our will is fundamentally connected to the subconscious aspects of desire. Desire keeps us thirsting for more experiences, as well as the quelling of any suffering we may experience.

None of us can escape from our destiny which is death, but we can easily speculate on the nature of the liminal before us. The liminal state, being an aspect of emptiness found through the curiosity of the human mind, could be a space whereby we have already cast off our perceptions of life.

In the abyss of non-being, all that we know is inverted on a fundamental level. Therefore, our very foundations of what we believe to be true about ourselves, and the world around us are fundamentally flawed. We do not know where the flaw stems from, but it could have something to do with our eventual deaths. Traditional belief systems do not adequately explain what lies beyond the veil of death. We must discover these things for ourselves when we are no longer able to report to others the truth of the matter. This is part of the great tragedy of consciousness in that we must go through the dying experience alone, and then either learn the truth beyond our flesh, or simply cease to exist.

Since primitive times, human beings have sought out purpose, and significance. There are only our own presuppositions regarding the truth of

the matter because we can only know what we experience in our physical bodies. Many have sought the truth through submitting their minds to the subjective, as well as the objective.

We can imagine the awe, and fear generated by early man, and woman, when observing the vast nature of the stars above. It is with this same wonder that we look upon death regardless of our background or religious beliefs.

How many have gone before us, from countless generations, and failed to decipher the truth of eternity? There will no doubt be countless more generations that fail to understand what happens after death. Perhaps we will never know the truth about the matter.

The eternal, being almost inconceivable in nature, beckons to us through the experience of the death impulse. It is in the gravitation towards death that we find ourselves in a position where we question the purpose of life. The death impulse is not simply a force that exists because of sentience alone, but it is an aspect of reality which stems from the natural world around us. Dying, being a physical experience, is very real because we all will eventually go through it.

If consciousness continues to exist beyond death, we can only make assumptions as to how it would function. The first theory is that consciousness shatters, as it were, into countless aspects of being which can no longer be recognizable post-mortem to the individual that once lived. Another theory is that consciousness is maintained intact, and we experience some form of transition between death, and the beyond. There is also the possibility that consciousness eventually dissolves, but plays back to us in a way that ensnares us in a continual loop of emotional experiences until there is nothing left. This theory can be likened to the degradation of film over time; there is still the recording of the emotional experience, but it is not a complete representation of that individual.

If consciousness is not only connected to reality through biological processes alone, it is also possible that there is a mirror existence beyond

the flesh. This mirror existence is one in which there is no physical body, only consciousness to account for. In this non-physical abstraction, it could signify that consciousness is somehow physical. What I mean by this is that all things that exist, even consciousness, are subjected to being rather than non-being.

It is also possible that consciousness dissipates and changes in some fundamental way where the self simply ceases to be. If this happens, it may be that like an old film, all our experiences throughout life are played over, and over until there is a total degradation of the recording. This could signify that there is no awareness as such in the post-mortem state, only various aspects of recordings of emotional events.

If the self dissipates along with consciousness, we then become unraveled completely as individuals. There is a distinct possibility that what we know about the world around us will expand after death if consciousness continues to somehow function. If this is the case, then we may continue to either experience the world around us until the possible end of time, or eternally in some way.

We may be eternally conscious, but not in a way we might hope to be. Our sense of self, as previously mentioned, is an anomaly that is no doubt linked to our physical constructs of reality before us. Everything is off bets once we pass through the veil of death. Consciousness may be the only thing that exists for us, and we may also interact with other forms of sentience in this abyss-like state.

Of course, it may be that we are essentially not going to be anything at all after death, and that the abyss will swallow us completely. Still, we do not understand even the first thing about what the significance behind this is because the concept of the abyss is highly subjective to the individual. It is almost unfathomable for us to recognize that we may end up being nothing at all in the end.

If we contemplate the nature of the abyss, it is possible that we can either accept our lot or go completely mad. We do not have any way of

knowing where we are going after death, and what the significance of the dying process is on a subjective level.

Liminal states of dissociation exist for us in times of tremendous anxiety regarding consciousness, and death as a reality. These states provide momentary connections with the abyss of non-being because there is a sense of disconnection with the world around us.

When we share with others the ideas we have regarding grief, and loss, we become transformed as individuals on a foundational level. Communication is one of the ways that we as sentient beings can build a strong foundation on because it allows us to express those emotions which are beyond general understanding. Language, being limited, still provides us with a sense of empathy when it comes to sharing our emotions regarding death with others.

We can imagine consciousness as a continuum of the symbolism which exists internally for all of us. This symbolism is universal in that we all experience some form of it, even if it is specifically unique to us as well. Perhaps symbolism provides a way to understand how consciousness might exist after death because it is an abstraction that lies beyond our perception.

The symbolism behind the dying process brings us closer to our true nature, which is that of suffering. We are continuously suffering in this life in one way or another even if we do not consciously recognize it. There are aspects of our existence which, if we possessed more keen senses, would be harrowing to us. What I mean by this is that we have a selective understanding of suffering, and even when we do not actively experience it there is a wellspring of continual pain that exists on different subjective levels. We may not always experience physical pain, but we do have deep seated recollections in our subconscious of those times when we did suffer. In the final analysis of things, we can say that pain is the dominant feature of reality.

Perhaps when we consider that we are essentially mortal, we can then become more mature as individuals. This simple consideration brings with it a tremendous amount of power because this allows the individual to theorize about the possibilities of meaning, and purpose. One thing that is observable is that we are all capable of changing our opinions regarding what we once considered to be the truth. Change is inevitable because it is inextricably tied in with time, and the process of aging. As we grow older, we have space in our minds to realize at least a small portion of the profundity of the universe around us.

Thinking about the void is a profound way to reconcile the survival instinct with the desire for death. To clarify, I mean that the void, being a concept that is so abstract it cannot fully be identified with language alone, is the starting point for our journey toward self-discovery.

Suffering becomes a catalyst for understanding that reality consists of aspects which are often undesirable. Pain, discord, mental grief, and loss all represent the realities of the objective world.

Depression and anxiety regarding consciousness and non-being represents a mirror image between survival and the death impulse. When we look at ourselves honestly, we then can see our true natures which involves preparing for death on a conscious level. Dealing with difficult emotions allows for self-honesty, which is important.

Non-being, as a concept, can be seen as the completion of human experience. Whatever we may experience in the hereafter is mere conjecture, but it is fundamental to our human curiosity that we explore possibilities which we may never come to understand. It appears that what lies beyond death is continuously in our peripheral, but never directly in front of our faces. Since we cannot know the truth of life after death, we are stuck fantasizing about possibilities which may or may not come true.

When we suffer, we become closer to the void of non-being by way of experiencing the darkness of pain. Pain causes us to forget our other concerns because it is an immediate direct experience. This experience

allows us to return to a primitive state whereby our minds are focused only on the present moment rather than the past, or future. Being present in the moment allows us to meditate more clearly on eternity.

Of course, there is nothing in the void which can be likened to what is in this world in terms of physicality. We can only assume that the void is what our limitations of language define it as; a specifically focused aspect of nothingness which can only be theorized. If we can theorize about emptiness, then perhaps it is possible that it only exists in the sense that it is part of an abstraction of our minds.

One of my theories is that consciousness perhaps dissipates, but echoes of experiences linger, and are re-lived by those who currently suffer in this world by virtue of being a fellow human being. Consciousness may be a gateway to connecting with others on a fundamental level because of the universal nature of awareness, as well as suffering.

It is possible that suffering, being universal, is the baseline for what we have in common as human beings. What I mean by this is that it is through suffering that we find ourselves amid a great upheaval of consciousness. It is through this upheaval that we may find ourselves experiencing echoes of those who have come before us through intense emotions.

The pain that we go through in this life is a direct result of living, and being sentient. Death removes this equation, and the void awaits us in a vague, and eerie way. The void, being an abstraction in and of itself, can only be described as the absence of all that we know.

The abyss of thoughts passes us by in our subconscious mind, and is directly connected with the conceptualization of the void because it is without objectivity. What we experience in this world is confirmed as being reality through shared experiences, and objective forms of logic.

The lack of objectivity in the void means that it could be a state of absence but with an inversion of the conscious world around us present.

This means that the only thing that might exist is the symbolism found within our current state of consciousness, rather than the whole of our foundation of what we perceive to be individually true about ourselves. This inversion could possibly be a form of consciousness that is beyond any construct of what we assume our individuality to look like.

We cannot afford to overlook the meaning behind the abyss in our lives, because in order to live authentically we need to admit that we will be enveloped by the darkness at some point in time. This darkness is not necessarily the lack of experience, but one in which we will have to travel alone through the dying process leading up to the finality of truth.

I cannot presume to know what the abyss consists of, but if consciousness is still extant then it is possible that it has some form of inverse substance to it. This inverse substance is not necessarily a non-existent thing, but a transformed type of consciousness where there is no sense of relation to the current laws we are subjected to.

According to author Poul Bjerre, "The law of the clair-obscure is the eternal law of poetry: one thing is lifted up in light, and another sinks into obscurity. But this shifting movement is not produced as a result of human evaluation; it is produced through inspiration, as an expression of the living forces in life, against which man is passive, although they operate through man." We live in a world of dichotomies, whereby there are forces that exist in which we have no control over. There is suffering, and pleasure, and the objective, as well as the subjective. There are concrete facts, and there are symbols that exist simultaneously.

Perhaps the void is everything, and nothing all at once. This would indicate that there is some form of matter involved in the void which we cannot directly perceive. Metaphysically speaking, this could mean that all that exists or ceases to exist as a singular whole remains intact in some way that continues with the physical nature of life.

Chapter Two

Reflections on Death and the Void.

Death, as a phenomenon, should not frighten us, but in the end it almost always does somehow. Death is a double-edged sword in that it could signify the ultimate end of all things, or it could mean that we are destined to experience some form of consciousness in the hereafter.

The void is represented through the process of dying because that is when we start to lose all sense of who we once were. When we are stripped of our mortal coil through the dying experience, we are then face to face with the truth of our very being. This truth can only be experienced subjectively because it is a powerful inward-facing phenomena which is propelled by the mysteries of the subconscious.

When we are open-minded enough to look upon the fact that we too shall die one day, we can begin an inner dialogue that is focused on the meditation of the abyss. The abyss, being an abstraction, can only be imagined rather than experienced directly until one perhaps dies, and is somehow mysteriously still conscious (if that is at all possible.)

It is through the abyss that we can imagine what death might be like. By looking at the world through symbols we create meaning.

Even though we are influenced by death denialism in our various cultures, we must confront it without hesitation. Confrontation benefits us as individuals because it allows us to hunt down those painful aspects of life, and be present for the moment. This is arguably the only way to truly live authentically because it involves the individual facing the truth of one's own life story.

As I have mentioned in my past work, it is important to consider the biological understanding of death when preparing for our own experience with it. By educating oneself regarding the processes involved in the

various stages of decay it is possible to turn this knowledge into a personal abstraction.

Life is one giant preparation for death, and this is the main principle of the void: to swallow up all sense of self, and being, into an abyssal disharmony. This disharmony is found through the abstractions which allow for us to imagine what death might be like.

For some, life is brief. But for others, it is long suffering. We must all experience, and live through bouts of tremendous pain in this life. How can we judge a person based on the length of time spent in this world when we are all relatively short-lived ourselves? All life is relative because when we eventually die it may seem as if we never lived.

The constructed self longs for the void because of the continual exposure to pain, and suffering. But what is the void aside from the emptiness we assume it is composed of? It could be that the void is a mere symbolic description of an unfathomable aspect of non-being. There are few additional ways that the void can be described in, and this is because it is so beyond our understanding that it is a peripheral phantom. This phantom, as I call it, is a spectral-like subjective conceptualization that can only be imagined, and interpreted through the individual in question.

Nothing we can do, however, can adequately prepare us for the eventuality of death. This is something we must live with, and allow ourselves to accept in as simple of a way as possible so that we can move forward in our day-to-day lives. Once this is accepted, then we can challenge ourselves intellectually, and theorize as to what our true nature consists of aside from the objective. The subjective is powerful here in that the individual can cast aside prejudices regarding purpose, and meaning. Our indoctrination into the constructs of living as human beings, profound as it is, seems to permeate every aspect of our lives.

Psychologically, we must prepare for the dying process through a conscious effort to expose ourselves to thoughts on what it might be like to die. This behavior, and line of thinking stems from a concerted effort to

experience the patterns inherent to dying prior to actually going through it. By doing this, we make peace with the various dichotomies of life, and can confront death with a stoic sense of freedom.

Experiencing grief through losing a loved one can teach us about the value of death. When we touch grief at that sort of level, we are experiencing more than the loss of someone dear. We are transforming ourselves at a foundational level due to having experienced a profound aspect of complex grief which is *highly individual*. This transformation is powerful because it concerns our ability to rebuild foundations from the ground up if necessary.

If we construct a new sense of being through the annihilation of prior mental states, we can prepare for death through mental destruction. This sort of destruction is visceral in the sense that it involves an existential crisis of an enormous magnitude for the individual. By going through a traumatic experience, we can work through difficult issues.

As I have written in my previous work, Essay on Self-Annihilation, it is through the realization that our world is fully constructed through social, nurturing, and educational aspects, and that we can augment specific features of ourselves fundamentally through psychological means. We have limited abilities to express our will which springs forth from primeval desires. In this primitive state of being, we are individually focused inward toward the subjective nature of the self.

Symbolic death involves transferring one's thoughts to the will of the dreamless void. By entering a meditative state where the individual is not focused on any specific thought, there is a unique way that the void can be paradoxically experienced. What I mean here is that there are psychological states of being which can be experienced that mirror the abstractions found in the concept of the void.

I myself have experienced the loss of many in my life, inclusive of those who I peripherally knew through my professional work. These

experiences have led me into a journey in which I have also been close to the abyss of non-being through the deaths of others.

When we are positioned to learn about death through bitter personal struggles, we are then able to decipher at least in part the significance behind the dying process. The significance here can only be experienced in a way that is subjective because it is through the individual that the truth of death is learned succinctly.

Society does not have a strong foundation when dealing with death on a wider scale psychological level. There are no pop culture armchair psychologists which can explain the magnitude of the importance of death any more than the average person can. Of course, there are attempts to do so, but these are essentially shallow, and devoid of any deeper meaning. It is through individual experience that the truth behind dying can be better understood.

Cultural traditions regarding death are somewhat helpful, but in this climate of globalism, and post-modernism, we find ourselves still searching for answers. There is a continual process of learning through self-education, as well as experience, which allows human beings to either thrive or stagnate on an emotional, and psychological level.

The void represents a total inversion of what we know, and is difficult to describe in any language. There is not any objective evidence to show that there is life after death, and this can be concerning to those that wish to entertain various theories regarding the nature of consciousness, but it is a fact that we must contend with.

Grief teaches us new ways to process the death of a loved one. The death of another person who in some way has touched our lives can be extremely devastating, but also a learning experience. What we eventually understand about ourselves is our resiliency, as well as our courage to live.

The abyss is a representation of absolute nothingness, and can only be imagined with nuance in the subjective mind of the individual. It may

follow that nothingness is also a construct of our minds, and that there is just a continuous physicality to consciousness after death. This physicality is referenced in how we experience the world, and the fact that everything we know to be true has some carnal relationship with the world.

When we imagine nothingness, we can simultaneously think about what it might be like to be embraced by it fully. There is a poetic sensibility to this concept because it is formed from the depths of the subconsciousness. It is within the subconscious that we can formulate an idea of what the abyss may 'consist' of. If there is any substance to the abyss, it may be that it can only be experienced in a subjective way through the unconscious mind.

Our reflection on the aspects of non-being mirror our experience with this life. Everything that we know is captured through our consciousness, and progresses on a subjective level within each one of us. We cannot fathom the profundity of mirrored relationships that exist between the dichotomies found in this existence, and the acausal.

If we look at life from an objective point of view, we can also concede that there is a subjective, and symbolic one as well that is important to focus on as well. When we open our minds to the possibilities that exist in between each dichotomy found in life, we then can imagine what death may hold in store for us.

Symbolism influences us in such a way that we must determine for ourselves what is the fullness of the spectrum of truth being presented to us. We must obey the laws of nature, but at the same time we need to be open to what our subconscious provides for us. We are nurtured since birth to conform to constructs which serve limited purposes for us. In addition, we have our own internal world which is a more liberated form of consciousness separate from the physical limitations we normally experience.

The will must be considered in the quest for understanding death, because we are driven by a primitive desire to survive, as well as die. There

must be a consideration between the possibility that we may survive death in some way, as well as the opposite aspect of this supposed reality.

The psyche is powerful in that there is an association of the subconscious with the vague notion we have of the void. Our focus on symbolism, dreams, and the abyss are manifested outwardly through an untouchable force found through the individual experience of dying.

In the void of non-being, perhaps there is space somehow for consciousness but on a level that we do not quite understand. This space could be independent of any stimulus, and measured only by abstractions that are difficult to put to words. Another way of putting it is this; that consciousness could be likened to an island in and of itself, and it is through isolation that we experience aspects of subjective reality after death.

Perhaps there is meta-consciousness in that there is a lack of understanding of individualism after death. This would be a form of shattered consciousness. Shattered consciousness could be an unfathomable form of consciousness in which we may exist in multiple locations without a sense of the self being present in any. It is possible that there is a primitive extension of what we know to be reality in the realm of death through continued consciousness.

Unfortunately, we cannot know directly what the abyss is like, so I will speculate based on what we do know about this life. The abyss may be a point of reference for a space clear of any of the elements of what we consider to be true regarding reality. This is where our consciousness may shatter, and dissipate completely. Or it is possible that through a temporal dissipation there is a convergence of consciousness into a new whole through some mysterious manifestation beyond our understanding. This manifestation could hold a clue to learning about consciousness in general as well as uniquely as individuals.

Upon further investigation, consciousness seems like a stream which may be separate from simple materialist explanations of function, and

form. This could indicate that it is beyond a physicalist explanation because there is that possibility that it is immaterial in some way. This is, of course, simply another theory which would then open consciousness to being some form of an immortal, and immaterial aspect of the acausal. How it interacts with the physical world is through the brain, but it is, in this theory, distinct from the physicality which makes up the world around us.

Science demands that we look deeper into the concept of consciousness as a concrete manifestation of the aspect of being. What being consists of here is supposedly the body in which we find ourselves, and the consciousness that projects itself individually into the outside world. Since consciousness cannot be so easily defined, it is difficult to determine whether it is somehow quasi-independent from cerebral activity or not.

Sentience is what makes us peculiar in that we can entertain abstractions such as the void, or non-being, while simultaneously being aware of the objective world around us. If awareness is part of what our reality consists of, then it follows that there is a distinction that should be made between the physical world, and the subjective forms of consciousness. Inside of us there is an entire universe of truth which can be distinctly experienced through self-expression. This self-expression is uniquely human, and specifically individual in nature.

The objective can teach us the principles of how the world works, but it cannot provide answers to the subjective interpretations behind the various functions of physics which lie distinctly within the individual. The individual here is the source of the truth behind the human experience because there is an expression of a complete picture which can only be uniquely engaged with. Our observations on the void of non-being are such that we can visualize what nothingness represents on a symbolic level. The fact that we are *able* to visualize *something* regarding nothing is a paradox in, and of itself.

By utilizing the power of symbolism, and the interpretation of the subconscious, the individual can become familiar with the principles of the void. These principles involve an inversion of what we know to be true because it involves the death of our bodies.

The principles of the void include the concept that we are destined for nothingness. This could mean that there is either a reemergence of consciousness through the void of non-being, or a complete darkness in which we are entirely swallowed whole. If there is nothing but darkness in the void, then it is possible that we are completely beholden to the destruction of all that we know to be reality in death.

There is a profound thought present when we meditate upon the void that teaches us in a non-verbal way the principles of the abyss. These principles involve subjectivity, symbolism, and the subconscious mind. In the subjective sense, the abyss is a highly personalized concept of non-being whereby we subject our own perceptions to the possibilities that lie before us. Symbolism presents itself as a form of conceptualization of reality, and this is due to the individual experiencing it for themselves. The subconscious mind is always present with us in this life, and is bound to the concrete, and physical, as well as the subjective.

The abyss represents not only an inversion of being, but perhaps a stage where consciousness is completely dispersed to the point that the individual is no longer recognizable. This would indicate that there is a complete disconnect between the states of consciousness we now experience versus what lies in store for us after death. If there is a complete change in what we learn about reality, it could happen at this point.

Within the stages of awareness, I theorize that consciousness divests itself of the flesh during the dying process, but possibly continues in an abstract way. By the abstract, I mean that there is some form of awareness that may continue after death if we are somehow still intact on a mental level. This possibility could manifest itself into being through some machination of reality that we do not yet have full access to intellectually.

Of course, it is quite possible that the nothingness of the abyss represents a finality that is beyond our understanding. This finality could indicate that we are destined to experience a gradual loss of sensibility until we no longer are what we used to be in the process of dying. The loss of sensibility, in this frame of reference, is related to the very physical processes of nature. Dying, though a physical process, is also a mental one in which we fight in vain to preserve our lives.

The finality of death often scares us because it is a negation of all that we know to be real. This is an okay thing to recognize because it allows us to be firmly honest with ourselves, and with others regarding the truth of the matter. No matter what our destination is after death there is something to be said of living life to its fullest through the application of reason.

Reality is objectively known yet must be subjectively processed by everyone. This makes reality somewhat unique to each person experiencing it. What is wholly true is that there is no reality without the perception of it by the individual. The individual, in this case, is required to be able to not only identify reality, and know its general equations, but to mold it, as it were, in the shape of one's own subjective perceptions.

Say that we do dissipate fully at the point of death on a conscious level. If we imagine this, then we can choose to live peacefully with the thought that we may not experience anything after death. Otherwise, we have infinite possibilities that lie before us regarding consciousness as a continued phenomenon.

The abyss, awaiting us from birth, teaches us progressively of its presence throughout the various stages of our lives. This is an abstract concept because while it signifies a form of nothingness, it also indicates that there is some profound nature that perhaps we just don't readily see. Our perceptions, being limited, only provide so much for us to process, and unify within ourselves so that we might construct a more complete sense of reality.

Our connection with the primitive suggests that our ancestors understood the power of flesh, and of blood in the context of survival. The primal nature of humanity is such that even describing these things with language is highly evocative in the mind of the one who reads it. Death, being a manifestation of the realities of the objective, continues to display its awesome power through how it affects us on a daily basis. Language, being limited in many ways, cannot plumb the depths of the fullness of the truth regarding our conscious minds. It can, however, be used as a tool whereby the individual perceives the truth of being through more intimate means.

Author E. Bendann, in their work *Death Customs: An Analytical Study of Burial Rites*, says of blood that "Perhaps the purification motive in conjunction with bloodletting is in the mind of the primitive when he lacerates himself until the blood flows, for there is a belief that impure or evil spirits attach themselves to blood. This impurity idea in connection with blood is very common." The primitive keeps us secretly aware, on a minimal level, of the mysteries regarding death through the expression of the death impulse.

I have written extensively regarding the death impulse in my previous works, and I theorize that it is relevant to understanding death from a more mature standpoint. There is a point where we must choose how we are going to look at the world around us. It is in this very point that we must decide if we are going to look at death as objectively (and uniquely) as possible, or not. If we do decide to look upon death realistically, it is only natural that we would theorize for ourselves the pieces which are missing.

It requires strength of mind to realize that our destiny is at the flip of a coin; we may experience extended consciousness, or we may be completely lost to the abyss before us. Either way, we choose to carry on in some way. Those of us who survive are either led by their own passions regardless of the evidence before them, or by reason, and logic. By following the truth of the death impulse, we evoke the truth of being.

The abyss reflects onto us like a mirror in that it is a profound source of power. There are no direct experiences that we can relate the abyss to because it is devoid of all that we have learned about this life.

We can become unified with death through the psychological aspects of the subconscious. What I mean by this is that it is the subconsciousness, and the symbolic, which is found within it, enact together a role in the preparation for dying by stimulating one's thoughts on death. The shadows of the unconscious mind, which are often relegated to a peripheral understanding in this life, come alive, and trespass into our conscious mind by their influence.

It is our unconscious mind that shows us the path toward death because it is where we are most honest, and naked emotionally. This nakedness is fueled by the experiences we have while living, inclusive of the shallow, and profound. All that we go through in this life is relevant to our understanding of death because everything is in one way or another a presentation of the morbid truth. This morbid truth is inclusive of the fact that we will die, regardless of our philosophical views.

Grief, pain, and suffering are all connected to one another, and this is so because they relate to the realities of death. It is in the dying process that one can suffer greatly, or minimally. Either way, there is some modicum of suffering involved. The actual state of living includes suffering because it is a feature of it, rather than an aberration. We experience pain, and grief because we are human beings, and there is nothing we can do to stop it. Perhaps this is one of the greatest tragedies of consciousness, in that we are subject to pain often without reason.

Nothing we do can stop the endless march of time, but we can control how we decide to view the world around us. In fact, it is one of the few things we can do within the framework of a limited will. Our will, being restricted from birth, can only influence the world through limited means because of the laws of physics, and through the evolution of nature itself.

Chapter Three

Speculations Regarding Consciousness and Non-Being.

Death and the void are symbolically interlinked. The subconscious is where we unify all our thoughts regarding the two. What death, or the void consists of, remains a mystery to us because it can only be visualized in an abstract way. These abstractions are found in the subconscious mind, and reside there even as we live. Each day we experience this life we are also coming closer to death on a fundamental level which can be observed clearly.

All the objective aspects of the world are subjectively experienced inclusive of death. This is something that is obvious through how each one of us, if we simply observe our behavior, act on a daily basis.

Meditation upon death may help assist the individual that is searching for significance in the process of dying. Theorizing about ideas regarding death can be a catalyst for more profound thinking, and an appreciation for the beauty found in the temporal.

We can either accept our eventual deaths, or we can continue to deny the truth. The choice is ours, but we will eventually have to contend with death in one fashion or another someday. When we do contend with death, there will be a tremendous internal outpouring of symbolism which extends from the subconscious into the conscious mind.

In life, we must recognize that there are aspects of being which relate to death even if only peripherally. Being cognizant of the more mundane things that we experience in their relation to death can be a liberating form of self-awareness.

Consciousness is linked with the death impulse because it is through desire, and the will, that we find ourselves contemplating upon dying as a reality.

Non-being is specifically focused on the essence of the inversion of human experience, and is the culmination of all that we know distilled into nothingness. Beyond this description there is not much more that can be said to clarify this position as the entire concept is an abstraction. If there is an inversion of human experience, there may be a completely separated form of consciousness which is not linked to the currently understood laws of reality.

Perhaps there was a point in the universe when everything was ordered, but as we can see, there is chaos everywhere we turn. The observable world is possibly arranged in such a way that we can never know the fullness of the truth behind the cosmos. Should we venture far enough, it is possible we could go mad from trying to understand the level of profundity that the universe contains.

The disorder that we live in is found in the objective universe, as well as the subjective nature of the unconscious mind. Both things relate to one another *because* the world is extremely complex, and interlinked with the consciousness we possess.

Each of us has a responsibility to mitigate the suffering of others through any reasonable means possible because the goal of life is the peace of nothingness. It is through nothingness, or the void, that we look upon ourselves through a mirror-like lens. It is here, in this moment, that we find that peace can only be achieved through egalitarianism, and concern for the well-being of others. Our consciousness manifests this truth through an acute awareness of others which is not always attained. What I mean by this is that we do not always see the fruits of our labor, nor are we able to always perceive why we do what we do to benefit others. When we help others, we are also helping ourselves, and this is perhaps the lesson that is learned from the nature of the void.

In the eternal fractured consciousness, should it exist, there are endless iterations of personalities, and archetypes that are like passing thoughts. These things are each responsible for our window into awareness

if it indeed exists after death. Personalities are like masks which we don throughout our life, and we develop psychologically within the constructs of persona because of cultural, and social mores. Archetypes here represent the shadows of individuality when stripped of a specific identity. What I mean by this is that there is a fundamental conceptualization which we must recognize as being primal to our nature.

The way we see the world right now is based on our objective understanding of the world processed through a subjective lens. This subjectivity is focused directly on the fractured universe which may indeed be finite. If the universe is finite, then it perhaps has an end where all things decay in some unfathomable way, inclusive of conscious beings. This would square with the idea that something before this universe existed in some abstract way that caused this universe to exist through causality. The acausal form of this thing or object which manifested itself into physical reality need not be intelligent, or anything that is cosmologically deific in any way.

The subjective teaches us to be humbled in the presence of death because it is an expression of the aspects of non-being through symbolism. This form of symbolism is powerful in that it emboldens us to carry on with our lives even though we are destined for the grave. What lies beyond the flesh is, as I have stated many times, unknown, but the possibilities that exist fascinate us, nonetheless.

Symbolism, abstract thoughts, and passing ideas all represent the internal world in which we process the universe. When we think about consciousness, we find ourselves lost in the aspects of what we do not truly understand regarding its significance to us. All our lives we are taught to believe in a specific way concerning our personalities, and these constructs are patently false; there is no way that we can know our true face.

It is possible that non-being is one step into an inversion of consciousness that may re-emerge in a fractured way. This fractured form of consciousness may be like nothing we have ever experienced, and this is

because there is no center of the self to rely on anymore. If, and when consciousness shatters, there can be no sense of self because there are numerous iterations of what was once limited to a physical brain. These iterations may supposedly maintain the awareness, and cognitive abilities we now have, but be completely separate from one another. Perhaps this is an example of the individual becoming several, at least on a level where consciousness is concerned.

Metaphysically speaking, our individual bodies can be described as reflections of the universe at large; subject to change, and organized in such a way that it is connected to our consciousness in a profound manner. There may be states of consciousness that exist everywhere all at once, or at least in many places without having to obey the current understanding of physical laws. Our understanding of consciousness is limited to the physical, or objective, nature of things rather than these theories which propose additional laws which are not necessarily congruent with the extant laws found in this universe.

If consciousness re-emerges through non-being, almost as if it was a steppingstone toward something else, it may be completely unrecognizable to us. We can only assume what it might be like to be another person, but we cannot imagine being simultaneously an entire crowd of people on a conscious level. Doing so could lead to a form of madness which would completely derange the individual in question.

Of course, it is possible, as I have previously stated, that death is the ultimate of experiences only to be passed through once. Consciousness can only teach us so much because we can only observe it as something that is real through our interactions with other people. We know something about the laws of nature because of how it is mapped out as schematically in the consistency of these laws.

One theory out of the multitude of possibilities is that we leave behind memories, energy, and experiences which in the right conditions allow for there to be a replay of events even though consciousness is no

longer present. This repetition provides us with a way to observe, or even feel, past experiences of others when there is no longer energy present.

If consciousness does not exist in a cohesive way after death, then perhaps we will find ourselves losing all sense of what it means to be an individual afterwards. Nonetheless, regardless of where consciousness goes (if it goes anywhere), we have the abyss to look forward to in death.

The conceptualization of the abyss is so profound that we can only imagine what the significance of it truly is. It could be a state of perpetual peace where we become one with the nothingness before us. If this is the case, then even in nothingness there could be some acausal energy which allows for there to be a conditional experience of consciousness. This would lead us to believe that it is also possible that there is no such thing as true nothingness, for even in the void we may have experiences.

Everything that exists, from the planets to the stars, is subjected to objective reality, and physics. This much we know. Ultimately, we cannot fathom the possibilities which exist beyond our current lives, and this is because there is no way to gauge what may exist after death. It is possible that there is not anything we can do about this, even in the future when more information is available to us. This is because it is impossible to have an objective view of something like death which is highly subjective in nature.

It is possible that consciousness is perhaps a form of matter that simply undergoes changes depending on the state of the individual. When death arrives, consciousness could simply slip away, as it were, into the abyss of the unknown. This would allow us to continue to have experiences beyond the necessity of a human body, and continue in some unfathomable way. The abyss could be a link to the subconscious mind because it can only exist for us in terms of symbolism.

We could see consciousness as something that emerges from the right set of circumstances, and dissipates based on the wrong ones. If the brain is required for consciousness to exist, then all these theories unravel

quite quickly. On the other hand, if the brain is merely a temporary vessel whereby consciousness arises, then there may be some property of nature which activates it organically without the need for a physical body.

Consciousness can possibly re-emerge through matter, and physical systems if the conditions are right, but would we really be anything of what we were before? This is an important question, and one that does not really have a direct answer.

We cannot truthfully say that we own consciousness, for it is something that arises within us as either a gift, or a curse. It could be *both* in some strange way, but we will never fully know because of the limits of our own sentience.

If consciousness is a gift, then it is one that is enigmatic, and strange. Calling it a gift might be too much because it isn't like we did anything to deserve it, nor do we have any source of where it originated other than by mistake, or as a consequence of some evolved state of natural development in the wild. This is a cold way of looking at things, but perhaps it is a necessary one due to the matter-of-fact way that we have been brought into this world.

The essence of non-being precludes any talk of the concept of the self remaining the same as it was prior to death. This is because the self, being a construct, is fundamentally flawed as a concept, and is subjected to the scrutiny of time, and experience. Experience makes us realize that we can change, and develop over time. This change could possibly follow us after death, and allow us to gain wisdom through further experiences that are currently unrecognizable to us, or seen perhaps as impossible to fathom. These experiences may be related to the concept that is active for the living called the death impulse. It is through the death impulse that we gain knowledge of our own fragility through a willed desire for non-being.

If we experience death, and somehow, we can still experience consciousness, it would be without the accompaniment of those physical forces which give rise to it naturally. This means that there is only a

temporal need for a body, along with the accompanying brain, to satisfy the requirements for consciousness. What this means for us is still unknown because we cannot satisfy our theories with the contemporary measures available to us.

This is not to say that just because continued consciousness can be classified as outside the realm of contemporary understanding that it doesn't somehow exist in some quantifiable way. We just do not have a reliable way to understand, and research it fully (if it exists at all). We know that we exist because we are conscious of our experiences in this world, but we have no guideline or guarantee that anything will exist for us after death.

When we imagine what it would be like to be swallowed by the abyss of non-being, we can liken it to the experience of birth but on a more devastating scale. This experience may be the most profoundly deep of anything we have ever gone through as individuals because it involves a shedding of personality through the death of constructs.

Just as we are traumatically brought into this world, we will experience some form of trauma, however slight it may be, in our own time of dying. This is just something that we must accept with open arms because it is a reality for us as human beings. By meditating upon the experience of the traumatic, we can grow exponentially as human beings because of the desire to understand our true nature.

Perhaps non-being can be represented by the resolution of trauma through the experience of a form of death that is accompanied by consciousness, however fragmented. By this, I mean that death may be accompanied by a dislocated form of consciousness that is more profoundly intelligent than that which we currently possess in our living bodies.

Consciousness may arise as a form of awakening post-death through the engulfing of the flesh in the enigma of the abyss. The abyss, being itself

a conceptualization of some obscure aspect of acausal origin, is a paradox because it is possible that we might experience consciousness through it.

We are socially responsible for the well-being of others because when others suffer, we are symbolically going through the same experience on an ethical level. This level of experience is abstract because it can only be somewhat explained by human language, but it still is mysterious altogether. If consciousness is fragmented after death, then it is also possible that the universe itself gives rise to this fragmentation naturally. Everything surrounding us may be fragmented in the sense that we only experience a sliver of truth out of the many realities that may exist. The physical body, being the center of where we process our understanding of reality through the brain, allows us to navigate this world with a great degree of certainty. This certainty, however, cannot withstand that which is unknown before us in the process of dying.

Logically, it is possible that all things in the universe are fragmented, not just after death. Everything could be perpetually fragmented in such a way that there is an orderly chaos which is mathematically possible. This fragmentation is extended to consciousness because after death it may shatter in unison with the rest of creation. If we are destined to become disrupted fundamentally, and torn apart on a foundational level, then we will become something else after death.

The concept of a god or a set of deities is not necessary for the world to have come into being, but if there is any truth to it, it is possible that the universe is simply the corpse of something deific or preternatural. That would make everything we experience part, and parcel of the communion with death which is unfathomable in nature to us. The reason why it is unfathomable is because even in the most mundane and casual of experiences there exists the specter of death before us.

As we approach death, we come to understand that everything we have learned eventually becomes part of the great fragmentation of the dying experience. This fragmentation destroys the constructs built up for

us throughout this life, and forces us to confront the truth of non-being through staring into the void of death.

The self, being a construct, will unravel after death, and perhaps a short time before. This could cause us to no longer have a sense of identity, or to be singular as a unified entity. We are at the mercy of nature, and we owe all our faculties to this reality of evolutionary quality. When we confront death through cultivated awareness, we are attempting to bridge the gap between the known, and possibly unknowable.

There is a certain humility to be found in the vast ignorance we have of the power of the universe. If we were to understand more than a mere fraction of what the principles of reality are composed of, we would surely go insane. Space, and time, show forth their laws which we must obey as creatures of the physical universe.

Nonetheless, we have the capability to think at a level that is not only rational, but abstract as well. Our subjective experience of reality keeps us tethered to the concept that we are uniquely caught between the dichotomies of existence, and non-being. As we have uniquely evolved to experience consciousness on a level that includes the abstract, this allows us to process cognitively the truths of reality before us.

If there is nothing after death, then we have lost nothing. The most poetic way to live in this world is to charge forth as if we were entering battle, even if we have no chance of victory in the end. It may also be the most ironic because all our toils, and trouble possibly have no meaning in the end result of things. This is a reality we must contend with. Even though we may possibly have no inherent purpose, or meaning, we can create both through intentionally willed living. By exercising our limited will to the fullest, we are demonstrating that we have a sacred right to personal agency, and freedom of expression as individuals.

Chapter Four

Thoughts on the Significance Behind the Void, and our Living Experiences.

Death can be communal in that it sometimes brings people together in remembrance. This sense of community allows for us to realize that we are all experiencing similar things emotionally regarding the prospect of death.

From consciousness, it is possible that there is a meta-consciousness outside the human body. This meta-consciousness may be a natural phenomenon which somehow exists throughout the veils of death. It is through death that we may possibly experience some form of consciousness on a level that is markedly different than what we are used to.

I theorize that death is a possible gateway to the knowledge of oblivion. This knowledge may be expansive in nature because it involves a lack of constraint because we will no longer be tethered to a body. Our consciousness could exist to experience the finality of all things before completely dissipating.

Though nothing can adequately prepare us for death, we can still theorize, idealize, and come up with various conceptualizations of possibilities which may form a portion of the truth. What I mean by this is that every idea is bound to have some grain of truth to it when it comes to thinking on death.

Meta-consciousness may exist beyond death, and can be compared to shattered glass. It is through the state of the destruction of the body whereby we shall see if consciousness pulls through independently or not.

It is also possible that we will not experience cohesiveness to our meta-consciousness beyond death, and may experience the abyss as empty aspects of the liminal. There may be a wandering, as it were, throughout

the emptiness before us, as we cast off the last vestiges of our human nature.

Darkness could be awaiting us, or we may be eternally in a dimension of subjectivity. This dimension may be close to ours in that it may function similarly on a physical, or mathematical level. If it does, then there are sets of rules which must be naturally obeyed by consciousness if it is to exist as some form of an entity (or entities).

One portion of consciousness might be forced to replay an extremely specific emotional situation and there could be endless iterations of these aspects that could arise. For each emotion, and each experience we have had, there could be a complete form of consciousness ready to re-live those aspects of the physical world in a non-physical form. If this is what exists outside of the body, then we may eternally be present at each moment. This is because of the conceptualization that different aspects of consciousness could be experienced one specific moment in time over, and over. Each moment of life could have its representation in the acausal through a repetition of the experience in a semi-conscious way.

If all prior experiences are re-lived or experienced on a meta-consciousness level, then perhaps we will dissolve and degrade over time like old films do. To clarify, I mean our experiences can be likened to the degradation of time, and dust upon physical objects like old movies left to the elements or in some room somewhere. The degradation of consciousness would reduce our experiences even further until we reach a point where there is nothing but oblivion on the horizon. Still, even if we are eventually destined for total destruction, this does not mean that we will not have some form of consciousness to experience after death. This simply means that there may be a point where everything we know to be true will be eliminated through the destruction of all forms of sentience.

If the void is a gateway toward shattered consciousness, then we will eventually become so separated from any semblance of humanity that we will not experience anything in the same sense as we do now. The closest

we can come to understanding this possibility is through times of dreaming, or the recognition of the symbolism found within the spaces of the mind.

We can also entertain the possibility that we are essentially destined for a form of dissolving which fully divests us of any human experience. This does not mean that there is no possible way for there to be continued experience after this dissolution, but that total destruction may lead to a reforming of the elements of what constitutes conscious awareness. No longer would we be bound to the physical body in any way, shape, or form.

The void of nothingness is a tremendously powerful, yet primitive conceptualization that is found in the most nascent of spaces of our minds. If we are to experience the void, we may be able to do so prior to death through simple techniques such as meditation or mindfulness.

The primitive aspects of consciousness which are untouched by constructs of being are the root of all possible experiences. Everything that we could possibly look forward to in this life exists because of those primitive aspects, and it is evident through the way that we look at the world from a complex point of view. We are both externally, as well as internally influenced in this world during the development of our senses, as well as perceptions.

Perhaps our consciousness deconstructs through the manifestation of the processes leading to death. If this is so, as I have already said, it is still possible that we may go through some form of transmutation which allows for there to be a kind of awareness which may be wholly unique. This awareness could lead to a form of being which is completely unknown to us in our current state of understanding. If there is an unknown form of being that we will eventually come to understand, then it may be subject to a different set of rules, laws, and physics altogether.

When we focus on the primitive aspects of human consciousness, we can see that beyond the simple focus on desire through the will there is nothing else beyond that. It is simply a void. The will, being influenced by

the nascent desire existing within each of us, desires either total annihilation, or eternal existence in some form. Both desires seem almost absurd to think about because we cannot imagine what either might really be like.

We live in void spaces already through our preparation for death on a daily basis. This is a focused statement which is intended to help visualize the possibilities that lie before us.

On a mental level, there is a uniqueness to the human species, as is evidenced through how we subjectively process the world around us. We know that other creatures have a uniqueness as well to their perception of the world. It is possible that there are varying levels of consciousness based on how abstract thinking can be processed, and utilized.

The universe, being so vast, could possibly contain countless shards of consciousness all representing unique individual worlds that are also shattered as well. We could exist already in this shattered form of consciousness without us being aware of it. We have been taught to believe that we are conscious specifically because of the physical nature of the body, but this may only be partially true. In the physical world, we know that we are in our own bodies because of experience, but we do not know if we are destined to develop other forms of consciousness which are separate from the body.

By living each day as if it were our last, we can manifest aspects of the abyss in our every waking moment. There is desperation in this sort of thinking, but it is simply based on the natural state of humanity on a conscious level; that of being mentally tortured by the possibilities that exist before us. We are never fully happy, but there are times when we are completely sad, and this influences how we feel about the world around us. In the death impulse, we learn to view the world through a different lens.

The will, being as connected as it is with desire, also reflects a genuine obsession with death even though survivalism is seen as paramount as well. This is the paradox of being human; that we are subject

to many dichotomies both externally, as well as internally. These dichotomies act upon us in a way that allows us to process the world around us in a fairly consistent manner. There is the acausal, as well as the causal, and death as well as life. We have the objective world, the subjective, and the desire to survive as well as to die. Each of these dichotomies survive within us as vestiges of a primal past.

Our reflection upon death brings us closer to the void in that it keeps us fascinated (and at times rightfully scared) by the possibilities that lay before us. If consciousness continues to exist after death, then it could be maddening to think of the possibility of eternal awareness. Even if there is some dissolution of consciousness throughout time, our awareness may be so focused on the present moment that it may seem like an eternity even though nothingness may await.

At times, it seems as if there is nothing but the abyss that awaits us after death. But what is the abyss? How is it related to human experience? These questions have no easy answers, but it is possible to at least entertain the idea that it could be simply a profound experience that we may end up being aware of. There is no secret to this knowledge because it exists regardless of our opinion surrounding the process of death. We simply must find a way to challenge ourselves while we live regardless of the outcome.

We can attempt to live our lives as 'normally' as possible, but in the end, we must realize that there is no true normal. What I mean here is that there is no direct compass for living, and all purposes must be discovered by the individual at the end of all things. The closer to death we become, the more we are engulfed in a dissolution of constructs which no longer serve us. These constructs are found in everything we have been taught to believe about our lives, inclusive of personal identity, and even psychological makeup.

Suicide, as a choice, is an expansion of the desire to merge with the void of non-being through rejecting this life. As I have stated before, there

is no encouragement whatsoever for anyone to make this decision, as it is extremely serious in nature. The seriousness of this decision is profound in that it deals with the total rejection of the physical body, as well as the perception of life that we once had. This rejection would seem counter-intuitive, but it is very much a powerful expression of the inner turmoil which exists within every one of us.

Those who choose to end their lives are closer to the truth of the general conceptualization of the abyss, because for them, their perception of the self is in question, along with other constructs of this world. The suicidal are those who are on the edge, and at the voluntary end of a lifetime of experiences. These experiences, being no longer relevant to the individual, become tiresome, and agony inducing.

We must maximize personal agency through recognizing the sovereignty of the individual through personal decisions such as the right to die. By doing this, we are allowing ourselves to be the ultimate arbiter of truth as individuals in ethical decision making. This also places us in a position whereby we are choosing to elevate the individual as sovereign in personal agency. Our intuitions speak to us in that we inherently feel a pull toward freedom which can only be truthfully expressed at the individual level first before anything else. This pull toward freedom elevates us to a psychological level because we are allowing ourselves to make decisions that directly affect our own lives.

In the abyss, we will enter the other side of existence into what we can only assume is a form of non-existence, or at the very least a minimalist experience after death. Biological life will perhaps no longer be relevant to us because we will no longer have physical bodies to nourish. Everything we know about existence will possibly be inverted in the sense that it no longer will hold the same purpose for us as it once had in life. If this is so, then each one of us is destined for a mysterious future.

The will, being tied inextricably with the desire of an individual, only exists as far as we know because of consciousness. It is a primal force of

desire which develops within the individual during their lifetime, and it stays with us throughout the process of dying. The power of the will to survive, and the will to die, are so strong that we can only imagine how we could maintain some form of sentience after death. Nonetheless, imagination provides a pathway for us to consider possible truths.

Some form of consciousness could possibly exist beyond the need for a physical body. It could either be shattered into endless iterations, or it could remain intact. If it does shatter into endless iterations, then we may no longer be considered individuals in the end scheme of things. What we become is a mystery because it could be that we may exist in multiple forms at the same time without being tied down to physical limitations.

Meta-consciousness expands upon itself, and is infinite in its expression. What I mean by this is that there is an endless way that consciousness expresses itself, and this is observed through how smaller aspects of awareness exist. Thoughts, desires, ideals, and ideologies all coalesce with one another in the iterations of consciousness which exist beyond the scope of human awareness.

Our reliance on the will for all forms of action keeps us tied to this world even if we are resilient in the decision to end it all. We could, as many have, end our lives, but this would be an active decision that requires the power of the will to invert human experience into the acausal.

Perhaps non-existence is a transitional non-state of an indescribable nature in which our shattered consciousness multiplies infinitely into amorphous forms. These forms could represent singular emotions, ideas, thoughts, and expressions which would indicate that we are somehow destined to be torn apart, as it were, in the great dissolution of death. This could also mean that we will have some form of meta-consciousness which may be experienced in a way that is unfathomable to us at this moment from our perspective in the objective world.

If consciousness becomes amorphous through an infinite shattering of constructs after death, then we perhaps are rebirthed into separate

entities with individual experiences. These experiences could be so far removed from what we casually go through that we may not at first be able to recognize them until we are in those moments outside of time.

There may be an infinite expansion of consciousness until it either dissolves, or is fractured in some way exponentially. If it dissolves, then there is perhaps an experience of memory in a way that appears to fade over time like the degradation of film. This could mean that we may either actively experience those memories which we have developed over a lifetime, or that we might be subject to an eventual loss of consciousness like what dementia patients experience.

Our fractured consciousness then could be experienced in a way that is not tied to any conceptualization of the self as we know it. We would possibly be in a position where we could not return to any state that is like our causal selves. This conceptualization, or theorizing is based on the possibility that all that we know in this world are constructs upon constructs.

Death may bring either complete oblivion, gradual oblivion, or an expansion of consciousness. If it is complete oblivion, we still do not have a way to measure what that really means. Absolute nothingness is not something that can easily be fathomed, no matter how much we may try to do so. If oblivion is gradual, then we may still have aspects of experiences to consider. If consciousness expands, then we may find we are phenomenally outside any construct manufactured for us in this world.

We must be humbled by the concept of death as we cannot fully understand the mysteries behind it save for the biological objective knowledge we possess. Anything beyond the understanding of our current developments in the sciences is pure conjecture, and mere possibility rather than a necessary reality. We must carefully consider this truth if we are to look toward any theory of consciousness whatsoever.

Observing those who are suffering can bring us to a more intimate understanding of what death may bring. What I mean by this is that

suffering, when observed, can be educational in a morbid sense of the term. We learn through suffering all manner of personal truths which we must uncover through our subjective experiences.

If there is nothing but complete oblivion, then we have nothing to lose in our desire to learn more about consciousness. We might simply just be teetering on the edge of a conceptualization in which we have no idea the magnitude of the aspects of emptiness before us. If this is so, then we might as well at least attempt to grasp a small portion of the unfolding reality we are engulfed in.

In the case that we are gradually dissolved into the abyss throughout time, we also have nothing to lose except our sense of being, self, and awareness. Like those who lose their memories during this life, we may slowly but surely experience a loss of awareness over time. As we diminish in significance over time through a dissolution of being, there is a return to the elemental, or base of reality.

If there is an expansion of consciousness, this signifies that there is additional access to knowledge that we may be able to possess that cannot be transferred to the world of the objective. If this is the case, then we are destined to experience far more of reality than we currently are able to observe. This may be a frightening thing to consider because we do not know the significance behind the possibilities that lie in the realm of expanded consciousness.

There is also the possibility that we can only know what we directly experience in a subjective way. The dying process, being subjectively felt by the individual, can only be truly understood through the submission of the will to the acausal. To clarify, I mean that we must submit ourselves wholly to the fact that we must enter the unknown in our own time of dying. After our actual deaths, we may possibly experience a series of deaths which are symbolically manifested as constructs of the individual.

Maybe consciousness is so expansive that we cannot begin to imagine what it would like to be both sentient, and eternal in some way at the same

time. We cannot plumb the depths of the unknown if we can only imagine what those aspects might consist of. We either must look at death as something that is a partially objective, partially subjective reality, or as an end in which we lose our sense of being entirely. If we choose to entertain the possibilities that we are ourselves confronted with by our minds, then we can theorize about these aspects of reality, and subjectivism head on.

It is also a possibility that we expand our consciousness after death until the physical universe is destroyed. This would imply that consciousness is somehow physical. If consciousness is connected to the objective causal world, but is somehow free of the constraints of the physical brain, then it must also be subject to an expanded set of laws which extend from the body to the mind. By following this course of reasoning, we can see that it is quite feasible that there is a manifestation of truth which is as finite as the universe around us.

When we meditate upon death, and we speculate that there are possibilities unknown to us, we are merely exercising our conscious mind in a logical way. Any theories that we come up with are merely products of our rational mind which must confront the irrationality of the unknown aspects of non-being.

Death, being a physical manifestation of something that is also heavily conceptualized by the individual, is objective, but may hold properties that are as of yet unknown to us. As I have already mentioned there is a subjectivity to death that is experienced by the individual, and this is tied in heavily with the symbolic.

If we are to be honest with ourselves, we must realize that there are only so many possibilities of what may happen after death. We either lose consciousness entirely, find ourselves eventually fading away into the ether, or grow in such a way that we experience awareness in an expanded sense of the term.

Returning to suicide as a choice, I believe (and have written extensively) that the individual is solely responsible for this decision. It is

within the best interest of no-one to limit the rights of the individual, and deny their birthright to die with dignity. In our focus on the individual, we grow exponentially by expanding human rights to include this most sacred of choices. For us as a species to thrive we must look to the individual to determine what is important, and what is negligible when it comes to human rights. Why is there all this focus on human rights? Well, for one thing, it is primarily because of the concept that we must be willing to recognize basic decency to grow to our fullest potential.

We must be willing to admit that we do not know everything regarding nature, and the metaphysical. By admitting this, we can be far more productive, and capable of exploring the possibilities that exist before us. In our primitive state, we can only assume what lies before us in the great void of death, but we will never know the truth until our last breath.

The void can teach us that we are extremely insignificant in the grand scheme of things, yet we are also tragic creatures because of our desire for the extension of consciousness. Most of us wish to be, and are focused on being rather than non-being, so it would also follow that if we were to find ourselves in a position of dissolution that we would be extremely depressed. Some of us wish to just return to the void of non-being without any form of consciousness, and this is something that may or may not come true after death.

The abyss of non-being is significant in that it is like a vast ocean of emptiness laid bare before us. This emptiness, far away from our perceptions, and conceptualizations, is so enormously significant that we can only imagine what the importance of it is for us. Although we are not ever ready for death, this does not mean that we cannot continue to struggle for knowledge along the way. As I have already mentioned, this is one of the ways that we can grow as individuals, and as a species on a fundamental level.

Chapter Five

Comparisons Between Being, and Non-Being.

Being, and the state of existence is, as far as we know, linked to physical forces. These forces are part, and parcel of the natural law we must succumb to in our bodies whilst we live. It is possible that consciousness is a physical force alone, and it may exist only temporarily.

Non-being represents a power whereby we will be consumed by the essence of death. Again, this is something that cannot be easily fathomed because it is such an abstract concept to us. Death, being a phenomenon that is linked to nature, is an aspect of reality that could possibly be a temporary experience in a massive universe that contains consciousness as a physical truth.

When we meditate upon the power of non-being, we also see a reflection of our life flashing before us. This reflection is only natural, and this is so because we can only imagine what is beyond this existence. We are creatures which are only able to perceive a portion of the truth.

Whether we like it or not, we experience death in a way daily. What I mean by this is that even if we are not touched directly by death, we peripherally experience it because of the fact that death surrounds us always in some way.

To express the will, and feel the power of the forces of desire marks us as fundamentally human in our expression of being. We can only ignore for so long the primal urges that are within us to explore the realms of life, and death. When we are left to our own devices, we end up navigating to either the extreme of hanging onto life, or an obsession with death.

We are individuals that are destined for the grave, but we also crave to possess the knowledge of the mysteries of death prior to our own passing. This is only a normal desire because we are filled with curiosity from birth regarding the nature of being. Even though we cannot begin to

understand the nature of eternity, or of even a finite state, we can imagine what these things might be like.

If non-being is a temporary state, it would be one that could be likened to a rebirth. We may experience nothingness for a time, then emerge somehow into a causal, or acausal experience of sentience. By causal, I mean it might be that we are somehow tied in with the physical world. By acausal, I mean that we might somehow remain entities in a non-physical form.

This rebirth of consciousness may be a temporary situation if the universe is finite. By temporary, I mean it could last millions of years depending on whether we are bound to the physical universe somehow, or it could feel like a blink of an eye in some *acausal* realm. We may find ourselves somehow decaying consciously after death all the while preparing for a second death.

If the universe is ever expanding without end, then we may find our consciousness shattered into endless separate entities further driving us away from any sense of self. There may be a point where we no longer recognize anything from our former selves, and we may separate into several entities of consciousness. This brings me back to a previous point I have made regarding how we treat others in this life. The point I have been trying to make here is that since we may end up being several entities rather than individuals because of the deconstruction of being, we should try to care for others around us as if they were ourselves.

In the conceptualization of non-being, there is the absence of all experience, and the consummation of the end of life in its emptiness. There is a profound visualization that can occur alongside these words because it is natural for us as human beings to imagine subjectively the significance behind statements relating to emptiness.

In the case that consciousness still exists after death, we may experience a vast swath of nothingness for an indeterminate amount of

time, and this could represent the separation in full of the individual's consciousness with the construct of the self.

Consciousness could be so abstract that it would not seem as if it were a possession that one could experience as we can in our biological form. We may be totally unaware of just how deep consciousness goes when it comes to continued existence.

Biology, and science, may be able to account for physical phenomena that is observable, but what lies beyond death is just not fully understood yet. This is not to say that we will definitely solve the answer of what happens to our consciousness after death at some point, because it is very unlikely. We just don't have the faculties to be able to process the information in front of us. We only know what we know about reality because of shared experiences, as well as the subjective experiences found in everyday life.

In the abstraction of non-being, we may find ourselves separated completely from any prior identity with which we may have been known under. This is possible because without the body there is no tying down oneself to the identity of a living person.

The universe, if it continues to expand infinitely, could possibly be a graveyard of consciousness in vastly separated spaces beyond non-being. This graveyard is one in which consciousness may eventually dissipate throughout time, and circumstance. If this is the case, then we might all be the corpses of some celestial force that perhaps we were once a part of in some form of singularity. Consciousness may be a waypoint to another form of existence which possibly has an end. This view is on the surface just as grim as viewing death as being a finality altogether.

If the universe is continually expanding but is finite in nature, then perhaps all matter is the corpse of itself. An expanding corpse with an eventual end. By viewing death as a segue way into another form of temporal existence that will eventually end in dissolution, we are able to see that all matter is a part of this swirling chaotic corpse of being. If this is so,

then we are already dead permanently, even if we experience consciousness for a very long time prior to the final dissolution of being.

Should all things have an end, it is possible that there are multiple universes that have a beginning, and an end intermittently. We could experience multiple deaths throughout time, and this may be something that we will have to contend with as a possibility after our physical deaths. In the wider lens of things, we may undergo so many deaths that we may be completely unrecognizable as individuals, and dissolve into a myriad of shells which represent portions of our current sentient natures.

Perhaps consciousness exists in multiple universes at the same time, and in certain universes is not subject to the same laws of physics that we adhere to in our own. If this is the case, then we may find ourselves existing in some strange plane of being in which we have no idea the depth, and vastness of anything.

The essence of the abyss is such that it can be likened to the liminal between which there is life, and death. The liminal is a space of pure emptiness, where there is nothing that can be recognized because it is beyond the limitations of time, and place. It is a conceptualization that cannot be verified by the physical nature of mankind, and this is so because it requires the experience of death to enter these spaces.

The liminal also represents the space between being, and non-being. I have written extensively about this topic in my work Contemplations on Liminal Opposition and Dialectics. It is through the liminal spaces that we divest ourselves of all preconceived notions of being, the self, or identity. In the bleakness of this concept, there is a possibility that we may reemerge from the void spaces into a new form of consciousness.

There may be an essence beyond the physical universe that is manifested physically, and is now a corpse. This would follow that all matter is part of this corpse stemming from that essence made physical. We could exist in a grand illusion where everything we think we know about reality is simply an effect brought about by our experience of the

laws of nature. We are trapped in our bodies with a conscious mind, and this is why we cannot know all the mysteries of existence whilst we live.

If there is no essence beyond the physical universe, then we may simply continue to exist as long as this universe exists as fractured consciousness. This would mean that everything we know is finite, and time, being relative, condemns us to an eventual final death.

This essence that I speak of has been interpreted in traditions, and religious views as a god-like figure, but I argue that it is without intention or intellectual capabilities. The essence I speak of is now dead if it once came into existence from non-being. It could have been that this universe, and all physical matter, existed simply because of an accidental movement of acausal forces into the physical world. If this is the case, then everything we know to be true is based on an illusion.

The essence of non-being may hold a clue as to what our universe represents for us. This essence, being unknowable, is a focused aspect of that which is undiscovered. Non-being is not necessarily what we think it might be because it is simply beyond accessibility for us to be able to decipher completely, or even partially. With all the advancements in science, we still are blinded by what we do not know because of a lack of ability to perceive that which is beyond the physical body.

Even if we cease to exist completely, matter will transform into something else, and we will still exist albeit in a different physical form. We may not have consciousness present as we know it since there will be no body to account for it, but there could be a dead physical form of what remains of our matter after death. This dead physical form becomes a part of the world we have known.

If the essence of creation is an unintelligent force that collided somehow into another force causing its existence as physical matter, all things are subject to transformation, and therefore this force is temporary in nature. This temporary nature is due to the concept that things in general are subject to change.

If the universe is finite, and there is some end in sight, then all matter will eventually become void space. Virtual nothingness would be our lot. But even nothingness is a concept that is hard to wrap our heads around. What is it with nothingness that seems so mysterious? Could it be that even non-being is some aspect of reality that has some vague substance to it? These are questions that have no direct answers, but it is fascinating nonetheless to ask.

To hold any theory requires an imagination that is focused on the responsibility that ideas bring. Author J. Dewey, in his work *Philosophy and Civilization*, states that "Imagination when bound by custom apprehends the restrictions that are relaxed and the checks that are removed, but not the inevitable responsibilities and tests that the new idea brings in." Every idea that we entertain has some responsibility attached to it by the very nature of the concept of reality that we adhere to.

If virtual nothingness is our lot, then we have nothing to lose in this search for meaning, and purpose. Thinking about the world around us is like gambling because of the fact that we can never know the outcome of our ideas until we are dead. Nonetheless, it is a very human trait to entertain various ideas, thoughts, and conceptualizations because we have a thirst for knowledge (even if we cannot obtain said knowledge).

Our private world will only become enriched further through the understanding that the abyss brings to us. The abyss, being an abstraction, is perhaps one of the greatest mysteries next to death itself. It is through the abyss that we lose all sense of being, self, or personhood due to the very nature of the dissolution that would take place in the void. The void, being mysterious in nature, keeps us on the very edge of knowledge.

If we compare being to non-being, there is a black, and white distinction that can be made. Being involves physical forces which, if absent, do not exist anymore. Non-being is present in the empty spaces beyond death where we cannot begin to imagine the depths of what it represents. These representations are based on conceptualizations that we

have within our very minds. We fabricate a good portion of what we assume the abyss of non-being to look like within our heads. Without our imaginations, we may never have an inkling of what the abyss represents as an aspect of reality to contend with.

On the other hand, we can look at life as being an expression of an aspect that we do not fully understand. Perhaps it is through the void of the abyss that we will learn our place in the universe. Until then, we can only imagine the enormity of the truth that we may eventually be able to understand with at least some wider lens of perception.

Even though we cannot know what lies beyond the great veil of death, we can follow logical theories to their rational ends. These theories presented here in this essay are based on cognitive possibilities which are simply ideas that may, or may not be true.

Each idea that I am presenting here is based off a few of the infinite possibilities that could occur following death. Each of these ideas, thoughts, or conceptualizations are based on the uniqueness of possibility in the scope of eternity. In the wider view of things, as well as cosmology, there can be an inference toward consciousness being perhaps a temporary aspect of reality. This temporary nature could follow the idea that the universe itself is also perhaps temporary. We could experience fluctuations of consciousness then pure emptiness in endless iterations throughout eternity.

In death we will, at the very least, become one with the Earth, and transform physically into something else. Our matter will still exist, but we will be something different than we were during our lives. This is a physical fact that may be followed by other unknown truths about reality.

We can only speculate what consciousness consists of in reality, because although biologically speaking it is the result of neuronal activity in the brain, it is also an enigma to us. We are in the midst of tremendous psychological, and theoretical growth when we investigate these things because we are fulfilling our potential as human beings on a primitive level.

The enigma of consciousness is such that we can only be certain of what we personally experience from the objective in a subjective way. There is a composite here that exists between the subjective, and objective in such a manner that we are uniquely positioned to report on reality from a perspective that is tremendously influenced by the limitations of our perceptual viewpoint.

Reports of what others experience can be helpful in understanding the world around us, especially as it relates to scientific findings, but we must also be aware that the subjective, and symbolic, are important to understand as well. We may only have a tenuous grasp upon the ideas, and truths behind the symbolic internal world that we also divide ourselves into. There are many manifestations of the mind which we do not fully understand because of the fact that we exist in between the subjective, and objective.

We may never have all the answers, but we can still search for them. Perhaps this is the foundation of not only desire, but of meaning. It is through inquiry that we become more than we were yesterday. The present, being the most important aspect of reality due to our unfulfilled need for constancy, keeps us focused on what lies directly in front of us.

In the end of all things, it is important to remember that both being, and non-being hold a significance to us as humans. Whatever happens to us in the end is not consequential because we must succumb to what fate has in store for us. Our focus on the conservation of the ego, and the self, keeps us from realizing our full potential, which is beyond our current understanding on a scientific level. If we are to try to grasp at least a fraction of the truth, we must remain humble on a psychological level.

Should there be a force that once caused the universe to exist that lay beyond nature, this force is long dead. This is assuming that this force had some form of essence that was related to being. If it did not, then the end result would be the same which is that we exist now in a physical universe alongside other forms of matter.

Much of our suffering as human beings will no doubt end after we have died physically. There may be additional suffering that we may have to experience on a level that is not quite understood because it is not tied to the physical body. What I mean here is that it is possible that because we may be destined to experience consciousness beyond the veil of death that it could be likened to a form of torture. To clarify, I am saying that consciousness, and the subjective manifestation of pain, both have a role to play in our experience of the universe around us. If we continue to exist, we could suffer mentally throughout a very long time in the ether of the abyss.

It is through the experience of positive evil, such as suffering, and pain, that we know we are truly alive. This may extend past our deaths if consciousness continues to exist for us in some nebulous way. The universe, if it contains existing consciousness beyond the physical bodies of sentient creatures, may be a mass graveyard of experiences that will possibly have an end at some point. We may already be dead in the sense that time may be irrelevant, and what will happen has already happened. Our very core ideas about space, and time, may be also irrelevant in this regard because our perception may possibly be warped by our subjective awareness.

Death calls out to us in individualistic ways that only we can account for. In the winter of our lives, when (and if) we have time to reflect on our past, it is probable that we will include death as an afterthought to each experience. Death is a powerful force which psychologically affects each one of us on an individual level, and spreads its influence on the outside world. As we attempt to perceive the truth before us, we may begin to realize that death touches all things we have experienced in life.

Chapter Six

How Does the Void Influence our Daily Lives?

We are beholden to the void because we ostensibly will end up there after death. What this means for us we can hardly know, but we must think of the possibilities of the significance behind it in order to keep from going mad.

Every interaction we have with others is colored by the specter of death in that we are gathering experiences which eventually will lead us toward the dying process. All the memories, ideals that we held, and conceptualizations of the self (and being), are all collected in the subconscious to be re-experienced in a different perspective during the experience of dying.

When we interact with others, we are rehearsing for our own deaths in a way. Each conversation we have with others, as well as conflicting or peaceful situations are all gathered together by the subconscious as a preface to the abyss. This preface is informed by experience, as well as perception because it is connected to the unconscious mind.

The void, or abyss of non-being is interchangeable with one another in conceptualization. Each of these aspects of possibility are developed within our minds throughout the duration of our lives as possible realities that we must eventually face.

We can perceive only what we have learned regarding physics, and biology, but we must be aware of the mind as well. The psychological profile of human beings is such that we have access to the subjective, as well as objective shared reality.

The subconscious mind, being subjectively perceived by the individual, holds a key to the knowledge of death. This key is found through a thorough look into the depths of the truths that reside in the obscurity of the mind. In the hidden portions of the conscious mind that

we have yet to discover, there lies a profound power that we have barely touched the surface of.

To clarify, I mean that when we explore death as a subject, we process this concept individually on a subjective level. The subjectivity with which we process information allows us to experience life in a complex manner. This life is composed of the dichotomy of the objective, and subjective, life, and death, and consciousness, as well as the unconscious.

Symbols are one way for our mind to communicate with us that does not involve spoken language. We are caught between the world of logic, and reason, as well as that of the irrational or dream-like. In these states of being we must come to realize that we are dependent upon each aspect of expression in this life.

When we explore symbolism deeper, we come to the realization that there are dimensions of truth which must be uncovered starting with the objective world, and moving inward to the constructs of the self. When we peel away the layers, as it were, of our falsehood, we become closer to the truth which is based on not only reason, but also a focus on the subjective.

The construct of the self is transformed throughout life, and it represents a continual process of foundation building through personal involvement in one's own conception of death. This is something that comes naturally to the individual, and it shows in life through the various mature thought processes that are cognitively advanced with age. Those of us who are either lucky enough (or cursed) to advance to an old age become aware of the various constructs that surround us from an early age. This awareness allows for there to be a dispensation of maturity in which the individual is faced with a choice to either look toward the future, and the mysteries it might hold, or stay within a position that is stagnation.

If all matter is a representation of the corpse of some essence that pre-dates the big bang, then that corpse can be seen as part, and parcel of the same matter we are composed of. Everything is connected in this theory with the idea that physicalism is a distinct nature that we are all

obedient to. The evidence points to the fact that we are not just obedient to physicalism, but we are specifically tied in with that nature as part of what we are.

The entire universe could be one giant graveyard awaiting us in death to transform into our ultimate destiny. This does not have to sound like such a gloomy end to all things because it is in a strange way comforting. To know that we are eventually going to end up as all things are (dead) gives us a reconstructed perception of things which gives us pause.

The center of all things is the desire that springs forth itself upon the will, and this is shown through our general interest in unlocking the mysteries of life, and death. We have an innate desire to flourish, live, create, and discover what may lie ahead of us just outside of our natural view. Being a human being is in a way a mysterious thing, and this is evidenced by the fact that we know next to nothing about the universe in the grand scheme of things.

When we are influenced by thoughts of our own mortality, we can then choose to create meaning in those interactions which we have with others. By creating meaning, we are not deceiving ourselves in any way, but are choosing to live a life of purposefulness, and sensitivity.

Though it were as if we were without senses, we fumble around for answers to life's complexities without a sense of satisfaction. The totality of what we do is insufficient for us on an emotional, and psychological level, to become satisfied with where we have come thus far in our personal evolution. In some perverse way, perhaps we are destined to the tragedy of living life as if we know next to nothing regarding our destiny. We might choose to mask our real emotions by filling ourselves with all sorts of ideas about purpose, and meaning, where there is none.

In our waking lives, we are influenced by the passing of time, and the maturity that naturally occurs with age. What we once believed in youth ends up often becoming a relic of what we will later experience as being

true. To clarify, what I mean here is that our sense of self is so ephemeral that we are beholden to the changes which occur throughout time.

For those of us fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to live to an advanced age, there is a sense of the abyss which is ever present with experience. This sense is remarkable in that it is beyond the scope of words, and can only be expressed through the subjective nature of individual subconsciousness. The abyss is so unrecognizable to us that we cannot assume that we are adequately equipped on a cognitive level to be able to decipher even a portion of what it signifies in reality.

The will can propel us forward enough to investigate the source of the abyss, but of course, all we will find are the remnants of older civilizations, ideas, and concepts which contradict one another regarding death. It is here that we crystallize our ideas surrounding dying, and what might occur during the process of passing away. The power behind death is that it is the greatest unknown mystery of the ages. It will always hold a peculiar fascination in the heart of mankind, and this is so because it is beyond the peripheral of our natural perceptions.

The primitive desire to survive is just as powerful as the will towards death. This is something that I have discussed at length in my prior works. We live in a world that is a series of dichotomies which appear at times to be in opposition to each other. In the truest sense of the concept, we can only know a small portion of what reality consists of. Perhaps this is a feature of consciousness that is fortunate for us to be limited by due to the mystifying nature of wider reality.

The essence of the physics of reality is perhaps where consciousness lies. It is here that we can theorize that consciousness is indeed physical, and part of the universe in some strange way. The world, being composed of matter, is experienced externally, and internally for the individual.

Grief teaches us the power of letting go through loss. It is through the weakness that we experience in loss that we are made the most authentic human beings we could ever hope to be. It is through this

philosophical authenticity that the individual is able to experience what it means to be human on a fundamental level.

Although we have no control over our deaths, we may be able to maintain a sense of being even in the acausal. If this is the case, then we may continue to experience incidents, as well as future visualizations of what we normally encounter while we are in our bodies. We may have a physical nature, and simultaneously an acausal aspect which cannot be described with words.

The causal forces of life predict what we think we know about reality around us. It is like a mapping of a projection that is simultaneously experienced by all. This projected map is utilized by us on a daily basis to navigate our reality throughout our lives, but it may not be so useful after death. We may have to contend with a new mapping of reality which we will have to learn like a language.

Even so, we are beholden to our experiences of this life, and we cannot fully know what is on the other side of the dying experience. This is okay because we are going to experience whatever happens to us at some point in this life. When we realize that we have zero control over what happens to us on an underlying level, we are able to cast aside those limiting constructs of being which have been ingrained in us since birth.

If all that exists is replayed memories through a shattered sense of consciousness, there is a possibility that we will eventually dissipate into other forms of matter. If we dissipate into other forms of matter, then we may completely disintegrate our consciousness into the void of non-being. Perhaps everything eventually ends up in this void, where there is an indescribable force surrounding everything in its emptiness. When, and if, this force surrounds us in a conscious way, we will possibly need to adapt to a reality which is beyond what we currently think to be true.

There is also the possibility that consciousness is not matter, but is a part of the acausal in the sense that it is ephemeral outside of nature. It may be a temporary experience which cannot be fully reported on since it

may exist as an extended reality beyond death. If this is so, then only individuals can experience the truth that the abyss presents to us. This cannot be a part of the causal realm because of the fact that the abyss represents pure emptiness.

Because consciousness may be without a physical foundation, it is united by the power of the void in that there is some connection between the dying experience, and non-being. If we are cognitively present in the moment of dying, we will have the opportunity to shed ourselves of the constructs of humanity in favor of the simplicity of the void.

In the abyss of non-being, consciousness could exist as an anomaly which is somehow fundamentally different from our constructs of what the self might consist of. The experience of *being* may be distinct from the experience of non-being, thus allowing us to solidify our conscious nature outside of time, and place. In the abyss, we may find ourselves surrounded by a darkness that is imperceptible to us on this side of death.

If consciousness, being of the acausal, is not tethered permanently to the physical, then it has more in common with the non-state of non-being. This is a different way of looking at things because it affirms that the self, being temporary, is distinct from the conscious awareness we possess. Once we shed ourselves of the constructs that bind us, inclusive of the self, we are then able to re-create ourselves fundamentally in the experience of non-being. The abyss, laid bare before us, is a great mystery which any hypothesis regarding the world, and our place in it, must admit to.

In addition, if we are connected on a foundational level with the abyss, then it is from the silence of eternity that we might learn endlessly from as our consciousness expands with the universe around us. This may occur until our consciousness is either transferred to another universe, or dissipates in this one at some point.

Returning to the conceptualization that consciousness could be physical, it would follow that it would transform into other matter or drift off from our construct of the self onto a more profound expression of the

abyss. The distinction I am making here is that consciousness will either continue to evolve, or enter into a form of dissolution from which we do not know if we will ever return. If our minds continue to function in some recognizable way, we may find ourselves connecting more with other forms of matter on a foundational level. By this, I mean that we may eventually realize just how connected we are with other forms of matter.

The acausal is where the abyss, the void, and the aspects of non-being reside in an abstract way. Our subconscious minds have a pretty firm grasp upon the symbolism which is connected profoundly to the void. We are theoretically close to the abyss because of this symbolism, and we also realize our duality as both living creatures, and individuals subject to death.

The abstractions that we can gather from the void are present with us as we live this life in preparation for death. Certain forms of meditation can allow one to disconnect temporarily from the outside world, and think deeply about the darkness ahead of us as a species.

Ancient cultural traditions celebrate, and magnify the power of death in their rituals. This is not something that is readily apparent by examining them, but it should be mentioned that death is at the very core of all actions in this world, inclusive of cultural actions. Every fabric of clothing, every symbol utilized, and every socially acceptable action emanates the power of death regardless of the culture.

Through the primitive aspects of non-being, there is a symbolism present that can only be deciphered (in part) by the subconscious, and subjective mind. This is where the individual is able to utilize various forms of art, and music, in order to translate the unspeakable realities beyond our understanding of the flesh. By doing so, the individual is able to elevate their own consciousness to a state whereby reason, and logic, can interact with the subjective vigorously.

It is also possible that consciousness could be fundamental in the sense that it exists on a proto level universally. If this is so, then everything we experience is universal in some way. What I mean by this is that there is

something within us that is a unique part of the totality of all matter. Everything that we experience eventually comes down to being one with the various matter that exists throughout space, and time.

There could be an eternal form of consciousness that exists beyond the void spaces of non-being. This eternal form of consciousness could jump, as it were, between universes as it may not be limited to our specific laws of nature. If this is the case, then it is possible that consciousness is still physical, but it is in a way able to transmute itself into conformity with other unknown laws of nature which are beyond this universe. Even the laws that we must obey on a physical level may be just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to realizing the fullness of the laws that exist in this universe.

In the darkness of our minds there exist ways that we can at least theorize about what eternity may bring. By doing so, the individual passes on a psychological level to a new way of thinking that keeps us authentically human due to the nature of personal evolution. Personal evolution is a concept that human beings have a continual need to move forward on a subjective level in one's own understanding of purpose, and meaning.

If consciousness is extant on a proto level, then it is possible that it is a fundamental part of the universe. This fundamental nature could connect us to the rest of matter in the universe that exists because we are a part of the world at large due to us being physically real. Our world is such that we are forced to realize that this is a very real possibility before us.

The universe is so vast that it would be impossible to verify all these theories at any given time. This is the tragedy, as well as the beauty of being human; we have so many ideas in our minds that we cannot decipher one philosophy from another when it comes to the metaphysical.

If we exist outside of our physical bodies after death, then we could possibly dissolve into proto consciousness, then nothing at all. What that signifies is completely unknown to us because we have no way of

conceptualizing this idea. We cannot know what nothingness is because we have no way to report on it in an objective way. All we have is the symbolism that exists within our subconscious minds to interpret the world, and the cosmos around us. Our reliance on symbolism, as well as imagery conjured up by the unconscious mind, is based on the isolation of the brain which has an internal, as well as external construct of the world.

It is through the possibility that consciousness may exist beyond the great void of non-being that is truly fascinating. This would indicate that the void is a temporary space of total death whereby the dissipation of consciousness could reassemble itself after the experience is complete. How this would happen is a mystery, but it is one in which there is the distinct possibility that we are going to experience it in one way or another.

The individual must decide whether or not to theorize regarding what happens to us after death. This is at the very heart of humanity because it is based on the idea that we have at least the *freedom* to idealize in our own individual way. This freedom comes with a price, because it is through our being aware of the world around us that we are foundationally formed.

Through our daily lives, we are continuously pushed towards seeing the benefits, and disadvantages of pursuing questions that have no direct answers. The disadvantages are clearly that we do not know the truth about our lives, and we do not understand the purpose of why we live as we do.

If the universe has some form of an end, then it is possible that a new universe could arise from this. There could be multiple universes existing at the same time; some collapsing and becoming destroyed, while others are born. All of these universes may contain some form of matter, and consciousness, which is fundamental to whatever laws exist in each one. This could mean that the void, or the abyss, is a segue way to another form of re-creation, and existence of consciousness.

There could be endless universes, all existing at once, and some coming into existence at any given time. We may be a part of this endless form of creation through consciousness in some way if it continues to

exist. This is both an exciting, as well as horrifying prospect, because it entails us experiencing things beyond our ability to process even a small amount of it. We are so miniscule even on a conscious level because of the fact that we know so little about our reality other than standard physics, and scientific findings that are objectively true.

If there are endless universes, it is possible that some of them are parallel to ours, and contain some form of consciousness as well. Perhaps we will end up in a situation where our consciousness merges with another form of consciousness in order to be aware on a level that coincides with the laws of the alternate universe we may be entering into.

Though we can never be certain, it is interesting to entertain the concept that consciousness can somehow transform into something else after death. Even if it stays relatively the same, it would be interesting to think that we can gain experiences beyond the limitations of our bodies in nature.

Our emotional relationships with others are representations of how we can commit to understanding the void of non-being. The closer we come to developing deep relationships with others, the closer we are also to death because we will eventually experience the loss that accompanies a lifetime of living. It is a mystery that we experience grief in general because of the fact that we too shall die one day. Our inability to process the truth of our mortality keeps us stuck in our complexity of emotion.

It is through the acausal that consciousness may possibly arise in a different form than the physical. It is quite possible that two forms of consciousness exist at once with our awareness being eventually split into more than one. If this is the case, then we may find ourselves in a situation where we are no longer bound by the construct of the self because it is no longer necessary for us.

What distinguishes our model of existence over other models that are outside of our direct view? For one thing, we are able to measure in our universe the distinctions between the truth, and the patently false through

hypothesis, study, and scientific findings. We are also able to observe our surroundings, and confirm what we see with others who may also take part in said research.

The model of existence that we have is one of objectivity, physics, and the general laws of nature as perceived by all through the senses. What lies beyond the world of the senses is pure conjecture, and as such, it can only be theoretically viewed rather than objectively understood. Once we realize this fact, we can then continue on our own individual paths leading to the ultimate truth.

Could the aspect of being conscious be separated from the neuronal activity of the brain? Again, this is something that cannot be directly known because as far as we understand once the brain ceases to function so does consciousness as we know it. It can only be inferred through various theories that there may be continued consciousness in some form.

If there is consciousness outside of the brain as a physical experience, then there is something more profound to the human experience than previously thought. This is of course pure conjecture. Nonetheless, it is something that should be at least considered as a possibility because we really do not know where consciousness goes to after death (if it goes anywhere).

When we allow ourselves to be influenced by the possibilities that lay bare before us, we mature in a way that is reflective of knowledge that is admittedly incomplete. To clarify, I mean that our ignorance of the truth should not leave us despairing because we are always in the process of finding our purpose for living through our individual inquiries into the meaning behind existence. We should be awestruck by the magnitude of the universe, and all the possibilities that lay bare before us as simple creatures of this Earth.

Life has a way of connecting us with death through the subtleties that we experience on a daily basis. Each connection we make with others brings us closer to death in the sense that we are preparing for our eventual

decline on a subconscious level. These connections we make allow for us to become more authentically human in our expression of the death impulse.

Though nothing can prepare us for death, our inquiries into possible theories can help assuage the terror that could possibly unfold before us as we die. We do not know what we experience mentally as we die because this is a personal experience that is individualistic in nature. I can only imagine it being likened to an awareness of the shutting down of organs, as well as the helplessness we might feel as we are entering into those void spaces of death.

The void is also represented by the actions that we take in our daily lives. Whether we act charitably, or not, we are edging closer to our deaths in such a way that no matter what we do we will have to face death head on. Being aware of this can allow us to make more reasonable decisions when dealing with others because through the knowledge of death we become emboldened to act with a degree of humility.

We are never fully separated from the void because we shall ostensibly end up in that non-state. How long we shall be in the void is unknown because we cannot assume that there will be a way for consciousness to survive the experience. As I have mentioned before, human language is insufficient to be able to adequately describe the void, abyss, or any aspect of non-being in an accurate way. We must feel, experience, and dive into the truth of the void for ourselves.

If we were to look at our model of reality as being one specific example among many, there are infinite possibilities that show up simultaneously. This model in which we reside has a set of laws that we must follow, obey, and live by because of the forces of nature. We must also be aware that we are subject to the ravages of time, and decay.

Nonetheless, we must pursue our theories as just being that; theories that are among infinite possibilities in the end result of things. As we look forward to new advancements in science, as well as in astronomical things

such as our understanding of the universe, we remain in awe over what we seemingly cannot know about reality.

One model of the universe is that which is experienced objectively by us through the recognition, and application of science onto the observable world. This model is forced upon us through physics, and our recognition that we are limited by space, and time. There is, as I have mentioned time and again, the subjective model of the universe which is based on the experiences of the individual, and the perceptions that one may have.

Another model of the universe holds that it is possible that what is perceived as reality is based on level of sentience. We have only a limited amount of sensory based information to construct our reality with. What we know to be reality could be essentially just a fraction of what is out there for us to process, and cognitively be aware of. The remainder of the truth could be that there is a universe so vast it is impossible to fathom.

Everyone is subject to death, and the very conception of the void that we construct for ourselves is the possible reality for us to contend with. Our lot in life is such that we do not have access to the fullness of the depths of our inner subjective worlds, even though we experience surface level rumblings of it in our daily lives. Whenever we visualize the symbolic, we are simultaneously attempting to make sense of what exists outside of our bodies.

When we think about the various possibilities that could await us, we are not merely dealing with abstractions but with hypotheses which may later provide additional pieces of the puzzle, so to speak. We may never solve all the mysteries of life, and death, but we are in the midst of constant scientific, and psychological sophistication, and advancement. The psychological is especially important because it is within this discipline that we see the truth of humanity manifest itself most succinctly.

My theories can be summarized as follows; that we either become nothing after death, that consciousness could exist but in a fractured way, and that either consciousness could remain intact, or at the opposite

spectrum there may be simply a void, or an abyss. These theories all require death to be the first of experiences that lead up to any of these conclusions.

It could be that after death there is absolute nothingness, and we must admit this as a possibility. If this is so, how do we describe this possible future for us? We can barely articulate just how we are influenced by the chaos of non-being because we cannot fathom just what total annihilation represents for us.

Consciousness may continue to exist but in such a fractured way that there is no sense of self, or foundation of being after death. This could mean that all experiences may seem dream-like in the sense that all we may have to experience is a replay of our past bodily-bound memories mixed in with the subjective forms of symbolism that already exist for us in our subconscious.

Harking back to Mainländer, the universe could have originated through some essence (possibly unintelligent) that is now as matter manifested as the corpse of that essence. We could all be part, and parcel of this massive corpse of being, even though we experience consciousness actively during this life. The mystery of life could be that we are all one with the death impulse as it is found within humanity at large on a primitive level.

In the end there may simply be the void or the abyss of non-being, but this could also be experienced in some way if consciousness is not held down by the need for a physical brain to function properly. The abyss of non-being could be, as previously mentioned, a temporary state of non-existence whereby we are separated from any notion of the self. This temporary state could be a period of a very long time where there are no experiences, no sense of being, or any semblance of recognizable consciousness present.

Chapter Seven

The Integration of the Symbolic with the Reflection on Dying.

"It is hardly necessary to add that myths are associated with every form of human endeavor; they seem to be a natural means of accounting for all phases of life, both material and spiritual." – E. Bendann, *Death Customs: An Analytical Study of Burial Rites*.

We must be willing to look deeper into our subconscious minds when dealing with the topic of dying. By doing this, we open ourselves intellectually to the possibilities that lie before us.

The subconscious holds the key to the reflection on symbolism within the mind. I have said this time, and again, because it is theoretically the basis of the connection between the essence of death, and that of willing to survive.

If our construct of being is fundamentally flawed, then our understanding of the death impulse is also skewed by our model of the universe. What I mean by this is that if all that we perceive (even objectively) is flawed in the sense that it is not complete, then we only understand death from that limited viewpoint.

No matter what we do, we will always be just outside the grasp of more profound knowledge regarding life, and death. This simply must be accepted.

We cannot ignore the possibilities before us, and this is especially true regarding what may happen to us after death. By searching diligently in this life for answers, we may come up empty, but we still have found purpose in the search itself.

When we observe someone who is dying, we look into a mirror for our own eventual decline. We see how the person becomes frailer, lost, and in some form of quiet anguish regarding their position. This is a testimony to the world around us; that it is filled with suffering, and short pauses of painlessness which segue way into further traumatic experiences.

We must process our grief, suffering, and sense of pain in a way that is beneficial to us psychologically. How can we do this? I propose that it is through talking about grief, and loss, that the individual can connect with others, as well as with their inner selves.

Ancient cave paintings attest to the power of the symbolic over spoken language, as it is a primitive aspect of what exists in all our progeny. These paintings are totems for the grasp humanity has on the symbolic rather than on spoken language alone. It is through symbolism that we find ourselves at the crossroads of existence, gathering for ourselves the resources necessary to survive without mentally collapsing.

Reflecting on art is another way for us to process the trauma of existence. Art provides a way for us to display to the world not only our trauma, but our victories, as well as our ambivalence in the face of the eternal. It is through painting, calligraphy, sculpture, and the audio as well as visual arts which soothe the existential pain that humanity collectively endures.

Even if we are destined for the void after death, there is something poetic about living a life searching for answers. This poetry is found in works of art, pieces of music, and in writings which express the power of the abstract in language. Our limited grasp on the periphery of existence, as well as our inadequate understanding of the enormity of the universe, is what keeps us from entering those gaps which are a result of our near-sightedness as human beings. These gaps are aspects of existence which extend just beyond our peripheral vision, and can only be experienced in this life as subjectivity.

We can observe in the great works of art throughout history a subtle form of desperation to find the truth, whether it be aesthetically or foundationally. This desperation keeps us moving on an intellectual level because it forces us to contend with the death impulse before us. The death impulse, being primal in nature, is what calls out to us from those secret spaces of void reality into the darkness before us. We can see

examples of it in classical painting, where there is a sense of naturalism augmented by the preternatural fears of mankind.

Non-being may be a representation of some form of symbolic eternal experience. This experience could extend endlessly, and perhaps we are able to experience the emptiness of the void of the abyss without losing our sense of consciousness at the same time. If this is the case, then we will have access to those forms of understanding which are currently inaccessible due to the limited reach of the natural senses.

It is possible that we could go mad if we are eternally subjected to the void, and are somehow conscious. The madness extends beyond the darkness that lay before us unfolding eternally in ways that are beyond our perception. We cannot comprehend the inimitable darkness for it is so beyond our understanding that we have not developed sufficiently to perceive it even vaguely. If knowledge were likened to a theoretical ladder, we could only climb so far before losing our footing in the ether.

In death we may find that there is a form of experience that is indescribable in current terms as language is extremely limited of a tool. Regardless of how complex the language is, we cannot fully understand the emptiness that awaits us because there is no term, or terms to describe this lack of being. We flail around in the dark corners of the Earth searching for purpose, meaning, and comfort. Oftentimes, we do not think about just how insignificant, and small we truly are in the grand scheme of things. There are billions of stars, incalculable spaces of grandeur, and endless systems surrounding unknowable planets, and suns. Within this amazingly frightening space, there is the Earth where we quietly make our way throughout this life unnoticed by the greater causal forces surrounding us.

Funerals are symbolic in many ways because they represent a steppingstone for the grieving process. The way we memorialize others, and have done so for ages, shows how we view the loss of those who were close to us in life. This also shows just how close we truly are to death, as it is through the recognition of the funeral that the individual can better

process their own eventual deaths. Of course, grief itself is a mystery, and we cannot fully understand it even when we experience it. Perhaps we were never meant to venture that far into personal insight regarding death.

In the remembrance of the deceased, especially through a final viewing of our loved ones, we become more mature without even realizing it. This is a steppingstone for us to move forward not only with our current lives, but to memorialize a part of us that has already died. Life is not black, and white. It is a collection of experiences, thoughts, ideals, disappointments, and moments of joy intertwined with the sordid reality that we will one day end up in the grave.

Loss causes us to find ways to cope with the unknown. It is through the loss of a loved one that we become challenged to continue in this world from a psychological, as well as interpersonal perspective. Everyone deals with grief differently, and it should be said that our subjective understanding of the world aids in this expression of one of the many aspects of life.

It is through the desperation of sentience that we seek out answers to questions that are too complex for our minds. We are continuously thrown about from one side to another with the complexities of theories, belief systems, and constructs that are meticulously built for us since birth.

When we commemorate the dead, we are simultaneously mourning something profound within our very conception of being. What that profundity represents other than our own deaths cannot be readily known. It is a passing thought that goes through the mind of all people, regardless of culture, or age. This thought is etched into our memories for as long as we live because of the depths to which it brings us into our inner worlds.

Symbolism has always been present within aspects of the grieving process. Grief itself is a form of healing because it forces us to experience the world around us in a way that is raw, and full of untapped emotions. It is through the pain of loss that we learn about ourselves on a fundamental level. There are things that we cannot understand unless we go through

them ourselves, and this is especially the case when it comes to dealing with death.

In ancient times, there was, in many religious traditions, an understanding that it was through symbolism that there was a great power waiting underneath base reality in a profound way. What that power consists of, and the extent of its influence on us is hardly known. Perhaps it is a universal form of powerful energy that unfolds before us through internalized subjective experiences. This could be the basis for many of the so-called spiritual experiences that people have had throughout history.

A part of us is lost when we experience grief, and there is room for there to be growth from this through a return to the symbolic. This return is a primitive throwback to the simplicity of human consciousness where the subjective is brought onto the forefront of importance for us.

The very human aspects of crying, anger, bargaining, denial, and many other emotional outbursts are valid expressions of the search for meaning. When we observe those who are suffering from a mental illness, from physical ailments, or a combination of both, we are directly observing our own eventual decline as human beings. This brings us to a place of great humility whereby we are forced to view through our perception of the world a new perspective based on an understanding of pain.

In our desperation, we are always at the edge of purpose, though we may not directly find it for ourselves. This is one of the greatest tragedies of the human experience; we live desperately to attain the smallest degree of understanding of this world. Even when we think that we have arrived at a decent understanding of the universe surrounding us, we come to realize eventually that we cannot wrap our minds around the world.

It is through the symbolic that the individual can survive in a way that allows for there to be a void of answers because of the multitude of possibilities that exist. We can rely on the symbolism behind our mental world because it offers a respite to the cold hard realism of the objective universe. The fact of the matter is that we have symbolism, and it exists in

some way even though it cannot be calculated the same way as physical objects can.

Though we are lonely, sad creatures, we have some purpose through the existential questioning of meaning, and purpose. There is some redemptive quality to humanity that exists in some way, and this is because we are always searching for something outside of ourselves. Whatever that something may be, it is part, and parcel of what makes us human beings. Not only does our search for purpose make us human, but it allows us to navigate other difficult things such as grief, and pain.

Those who are the most affected by loss have a profound understanding of death in a way that cannot fully be described by language. This is where the power of art, music, and the abstract can flourish within the individual, as well as the world at large.

Our model of the world, built upon the laws of physics, and neuro-scientific knowledge, is still incomplete in the sense that we do not possess the fullness of understanding regarding consciousness. The fullness of understanding cannot be reached through conventional means because we have a limit to what we can know about our reality. For all we know, a good portion of our reality is manufactured for us, at least from a sociological perspective.

Consciousness, being the greatest enigma of them all, is powerful in that there are so many questions regarding its mysterious origins. Is it simply a condition of evolution or is it something else entirely? How does consciousness fit into the grand scheme of things, when we consider both the age, and breadth of the universe which we hardly understand? These are questions which have haunted mankind since the dawn of history.

Conclusion

Returning to the Concept of Non-Thought, We Must Recognize that We are Fundamentally Connected with the Void of Non-Being.

The abyss of thoughts connects us with the void of non-being through our silent reflection on the possibilities before us. It is as if we are naked, and without any knowledge at all, and this is because we have a very limited grasp on reality outside of our current understanding of scientific facts. There could be a whole set of laws that we do not know exist because we have such a tenuous understanding of reality as it truly exists. Perhaps if we knew more than we do now we would be in a very bad place mentally because of the realization of just how small we truly are in the grand scheme of things.

We must be willing to hold an open dialogue regarding death throughout society at every level. When we observe society, and all its ailments, we see irrefutable proof that we do not reflect often on death. The proof here is in the fact that we must contend with wars, interpersonal conflicts, ideological clashes, and the pettiness of the human mind.

Being aware of our insignificance plays a huge role in whether we will even bother to entertain any of these theories. Just observing current affairs in politics, social conflicts, and the intersection between the individual, and society at large provides evidence that we do not focus on the truth behind death. The result of all things is that we are destined for the grave, and this should humble us far more than it does on a conscious level. If there truly was a focus on death as a reality then people would not be as petty as they are in any subject imaginable inclusive of politics, and behavior.

The unconscious mind, as mentioned before, is at the center of our journey toward the unknown abyss. There are many ways that consciousness can be interpreted in terms of the purpose it has for us as human beings. When we focus on the abyss, and the darkness that is before us, we learn quickly that even our best-intentioned arguments have no standing against the grandeur of non-being. It is through the actual

dying process that we will get to see a glimpse of the concept of the abyss more clearly, at least on a subjective level. We will experience an incredibly harrowing experience through dying, but we will also have a greater sense of the truth by then because of these things which must come to pass.

Consciousness may disperse after death. Only on a subjective level can we imagine consciousness as being something more than a condition of the brain, and neurons. Consciousness could simply fail to exist once the biological conditions for it cease. This is something we must all contend with. The truth is that we cannot handle more than what we can view in our limited scope of knowledge. If we were to know more, perhaps, as earlier suggested, we would go mad.

The here, and now, is representative of the void because we are present in the moment. What I mean by this is that if we choose to be mentally present at each moment, we will be able to understand to a degree the nature of the void from a subjective standpoint. This is an abstraction, of course, but it is one in which it makes sense from a personal perspective. When it comes to death, we can only know the objective physical truths that have been revealed to us by science, but we also must recognize that we are currently very limited in what we do know.

Besides biological truths, we only have speculation, and that can be a cause for despair. This is part of the human condition; to continuously search for the truth behind things which exist, and to fail to find the whole equation in this terrifying puzzle we call life. In the end scheme of things, we only have what we know about scientific facts, and everything else is mere conjecture. These concepts about human perception show that we are limited to the dichotomies of objective, and subjective cognition.

Whether life is long suffering, or brief, it always ends in the same situation, which is the dying process. We will all experience death in some way, and we can never truly prepare for it regardless of how benign of an experience it may end up being for us.

We can look toward cultural traditions for conventional answers regarding the purpose of life, but there is something that is not immediately answered about death that is convincing in the long run. Many religions claim an outside force as being the principal initiator of the cosmos, inclusive of humanity. The principal initiator could be either dead, or inanimate, in the sense that there is only the corpse of inanimate matter to encounter in this universe. We could be a part of that matter, but evolved in such a manner that we now are cognizant of our predicament and now rely on biological systems to keep us alive, albeit temporarily.

Suffering brings us back to the primitive aspects of non-thought which are closer to the void. By suffering, we forget our ideals for the future, or anything whatsoever except for the present moment. Through being in the moment, the individual can experience life as it truly is, full of pain, and sorrow.

Returning to the primitive, as I have mentioned before, it is quite feasible to imagine early man, and woman, looking up to the stars in a blend of astonishment, and fear. This fear is what is currently present within us at the very bottom of what makes us human beings. We are constantly troubled by the world around us, and our lack of understanding of the big picture.

A longing for the void comes to us through the experience of suffering we go through on a daily basis. As we long for the void, and the experience of the unknown, we often wonder why it is we exist in the first place (outside of natural biology). This wondering keeps us focused on what cannot be known, even though we exist in the objective world (as far as we know). Nonetheless, we push forward through all the suffering, pain, and grief, and search for answers in the vast starry skies.

I have said that death is a possible gateway to the knowledge of oblivion. What I meant by this is that it is possible that our consciousness becomes aware of the possibility of dissolution prior to death. There may be hallucinations that accompany this awareness, and this could be

influenced by the dying brain. Perhaps the last thing we ever learn before dying is the profundity of oblivion, and the abyss.

We are aware of the void, and of the objective reality before us simultaneously. At some point we are going to have to reconcile our subjective inner world with the external objective one. This can only be done at a personal level because these experiences are specifically tied in with the subjective, and how we process things. As individuals, we are categorically within the realm of the absurd when we internalize things.

Symbolism, and abstract ideas drive us toward knowledge even if we cannot possess the fullness of understanding regarding reality. When we make abstractions, we communicate only with ourselves because we are in the abyss of thought. We cannot communicate our inner world successfully to others in the deepest of ways because we have an internal language that is succinct from communal language that is casually used.

The communal aspects of death not only bring us together, but it solidifies the fact that we all experience some form of grief in our lives. Death, being a point of reality which we all must face, shows itself to us in such a way that we are beholden to its truth. The sorrow we face when we lose a loved one is comparable to the profundity of dying itself, and this is shown through the level of emotional pain that individuals go through in the grieving process.

What if non-being is a temporary state somehow? This is a point I have brought up earlier in this work, and it must be clarified further. The abyss, or aspect of the void, which only encompasses the realm of non-being, could possibly deconstruct our consciousness for a temporary timeframe. After it has done so, we could emerge as shattered aspects of multi-conscious entities far removed from the conceptualization of the self.

Death, being a possible gateway to the knowledge of oblivion, is profound in that it holds many mysteries that will not be solved until we die. These mysteries have always been beyond our understanding, and it is unlikely that we will gain the knowledge that we seek in our lifetimes. This

could be seen as unfortunate, but it is in the search for truth itself that we find the meaning of life unveiled to us.

It is possible that we may experience deep emotional events through part of our fractured consciousness after death. These events could be reflections of our lives prior to dying, and could be visible to us as memory markers. If we experience traumatic (or emotional) events in a repetitive way through an engaged memory, we may be forced to work through those situations one by one.

If consciousness continues to exist, we may have a whole body of knowledge that is not accessible to us in the objective universe. The subjective mind is the closest we can come to what lies beyond the flesh, and this is because it is in tune with the essence of death by virtue of its own preoccupation with mortality. Our conscious minds are focused on survival, and continued existence, whilst our subconscious minds are far more morbid in expression.

Our uniqueness as a species is also the source of our downfall. I am referring to consciousness as it is expressed in our current models based on objective facts. What we do know about the world is so fractured that we often are missing pieces of the puzzle, as it were, when it comes to understanding the objective. We must conclude, therefore, that this is something that we must simply accept about the human mind.

The suicidal are close to the spirit of the void because there is a sense of an abandonment of not only the self, but of all the constructs which pervade throughout the human experience. There is no romanticism here. The extreme pain that someone must go through to consider ending their own lives is beyond imagination, and can only be understood from the perspective of the individual.

Since being is limited as far as we know to the physical, there is only what we can describe as the acausal, or non-being when it comes to anything uncreated. The acausal is a mirror image likened unto everything we experience all at once, but in reverse. There is nothing to compare it to

because it is part, and parcel of the void itself. There is a distinct darkness before us regarding the uncreated essence, and this is due to our ignorance of what it might be composed of.

Looking back on our lives, we become closer to the void of non-being through the humility that is found in reconsidering our life choices. We can never go back and change the past, but we can look deeply into the current moment, which is where the spirit of death lies, and envision for ourselves something that is beyond our constructs of being. All our lives have been surmounted by not only physical constructs, but mental ones of our own devising.

Symbolism is the language of the subconscious mind, and it is manifested through the search for meaning in death. I have come to this conclusion because human language as it is constructed appears to be vastly inferior to the expression of the individual in the subjective world. The symbolic is universal, and at the same time very specific to the individual because it is an internal language that is expressed uniquely by each one of us.

Even if consciousness does not continue, our physical bodies will transform into something else throughout time. In this regard, we may be finding ourselves becoming truly one with all that exists. If this is the case, then we are no different than lifeless matter or rocks floating in space. Our consciousness could be a mere blip in time whereby we only experience it once until the hour of our deaths.

We are gathering experiences for the future when we will be able to look back on our ideals, actions, and reactions. The moment of death is where we are united as a species because of the universality of individual experience.

If consciousness is somehow independent of the need for physical neuronal activity in the brain, then this leads to the concept that the self is but a construct of socialization throughout time. This is a difficult realization to make because it involves the individual losing their sense of

place in the universe. The individual, brought into this world with a preconceived set of notions, ideals, and thoughts which are pressed upon all of us, maintains nothing of their former identity when preparing for death.

Since we have only a limited way of perceiving things through our consciousness in the objective world, we cannot fully perceive the nature of reality beyond such a model. Our model that we are currently subject to is composed of all the laws, forms of identity, and physics that we have come to understand through scientific facts.

As I have mentioned before, the universe could be one seemingly endless graveyard of matter. In this graveyard we find ourselves conscious, and aware of our fate. Perhaps we will find that the universe is seemingly void because of those vast spaces between objects. What I mean by this is that we may continue to be conscious after death, but may also find ourselves travelling through seemingly empty black spaces.

There are many dimensions to the truth, and this is shown through our understanding of physics, mathematics, and other sciences. In addition, we are continuously searching for a way for there to be a consensus as to what reality consists of, though this is part of a harder problem. We can know only so much about the truth behind things, even theoretically, because of the limitations of our five senses.

Since the void resides in the subconscious to some extent, it is also present throughout the mind as a form of reality yet to be fully understood. We always experience death because of the power of the subjective. This reminder is found in nature as we experience it, and through the dying process itself.

The fear of death must be addressed fully for there to be a clearing of the mind required to explore the theoretical possibilities of consciousness around us. Without this clarity, there cannot be a willful intellectual look into the mysteries of death. Once the individual decides to empty themselves mentally of any unnatural construct that they normally live

with, there is a new possibility to intellectually dive into the world of the unknown. The acausal, being an aspect of an uncreated essence, can be a representation of the abyss for us because it represents that which does not have a form.

The entirety of the universe could be the result of some metaphysical force manifesting into the objective world in a disjointed, and death-like manner. This force, which could be inanimate, or at the very worst demiurge-like, could have come into existence as a corpse or be likened to a corpse in the sense that it is possibly bereft of consciousness in this world. We could be the result of a series of evolutionary, and biological blunders situated in such a way as to possess consciousness, and are only now realizing just how insignificant we truly are in the grand scheme of things.

All things that exist could be part of an eternal cycle of death which is only understood after dying. This cycle could continuously play out in our universe, as well as other possible universes that may exist. We may be subject to death more than once, perhaps as a loss of consciousness, and then reformed into something else with sentience.

We are forced to follow specific laws in this universe, but with consciousness there could be a completely different set of laws which are expanded ones hidden adjacent to our own timeline. What these laws consist of is impossible to determine, at least now. To clarify an earlier supposition, it is possible that non-being is representative of an eternal understanding of a stream of consciousness that is separated from any construct of the self. The abyss is a construct of our imagination, but may somehow present itself to us at some point after death, or immediately following it.

I have said that the void can teach us about ourselves because it makes us realize just how insignificant we are, and that is true. We can only know so much about the world around us, and this is reflected in the incredible ignorance that we have regarding the cosmos. Of course, we

have what we call advanced knowledge, but even here it is admittedly off the center because there is so much more to know.

Our model of existence is one in which we can only see the objective as it is presented to us, but we cannot accurately perceive the extent that the symbolic, and subjective affect us. On a subconscious level we are profoundly affected by the thoughts, mental visuals, and ideals which come to us in a primal way. We are always at the edge of death, even if it be from a metaphorical standpoint. We may not consciously think of it, but death is at the forefront of our minds when we are truly honest with ourselves (and others).

Reality is not complete without a full understanding of what we are looking for. The universe around us has shown its laws to us through trial, and error, and revelation through mathematics, and other means. We only have an inkling of the faintest idea just how massive creation really is other than through the observable universe, and if there are other universes surrounding us concurrently, that is also at least partially a mystery.

The models of existence that we go by are sorely lacking due to our inability to perceive beyond our senses. We do not know what lies beyond our flesh other than biological death. Consciousness is still an enigma, and cannot fully be deciphered at the core of what it represents for us. This is something that simply must be accepted as being our lot in this world.

What is real for an animal, or other creature, is the extent of reality for them. We also have a limit to what our reality consists of, and this is because we are subjected to our five senses alone. There is no way for us to view those twisted angles of truth which are hidden within our reality because we lack the natural resources to decipher them. If we could decipher them, then this knowledge would possibly be beyond our grasp.

In conclusion, the void, non-being, and the abyss of emptiness are all concepts which may or may not have any importance for us after death. We could be in a situation where we must contend with the possibility of

continued existence in an altered state of consciousness, or we could succumb to the oblivion of non-being.

Our models of the universe are not all encompassing in the sense that they do not fully integrate the subjective, and acausal. These things cannot be integrated, or even interpreted in a way that coincides fully with the established laws of nature before us.

Suffering brings us closer to an understanding of our purpose, and allows us to create meaningful experiences through it. When we do not suffer, we are often simply at rest, anticipating the next series of pains that we must go through. This is the law of nature; that we suffer, struggle, and find unique ways to survive through it all. We are, after all, still primitive beings which compels us to satisfy our base needs first prior to intellectualizing anything. The basis for our survival is found in how we respond to natural events as they happen in our lives.

We are severely limited as a species because we are subject to our agreed upon reality through experience alone. We have no basis for our foundation upon which we live other than the boundaries of the objective which encroaches upon us moment, by moment. Sometimes, it can seem like the objective is an aspect of reality that is only visible the way it is through our five senses. This is, of course, conjecture, but it is interesting to think upon.

We are blinded by our inability to grasp the true nature of reality, and must settle for the models that have come before us. This is something that must be accepted, but at the same time there is validity to theorizing about what might be true. In doing so, we grow individually, as well as a species, because we are exercising our consciousness in a way that is unorthodox, and challenging our own perceptions of what we see when we look at ourselves.

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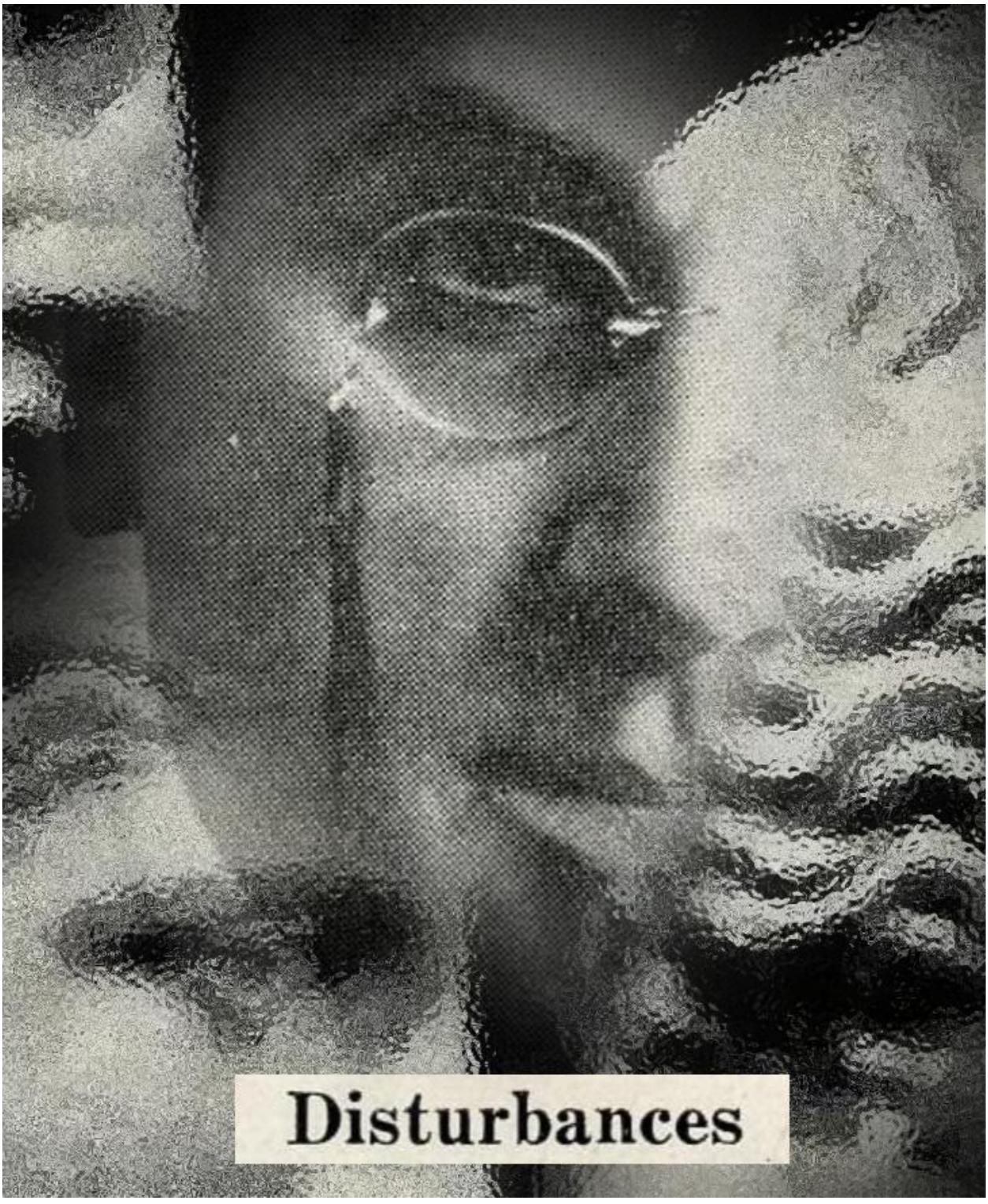
Disturbances

Essay on the Limitations of Free Will

Preface

Why I have Decided to Write about Free Will.

There comes a point in every individual's life when the very fundamental questions on meaning are up in the air, and the realization of the limits of time persuade one to make the most of an unsatisfactory existence. This is one of those times for me, particularly because in my own life I am amid a great ideological evolution based on my developing philosophies regarding being. I felt the need to discuss those ideas which, though they exist primarily in my mind, are distinctive enough to warrant writing down formally.

When we look deeper at those aspects of the will, we are immediately confronted with the prospect that not everything is as it seems. To quote Carl Jung, in his work entitled the Psychology of the Unconscious, life for us sentient beings is summarized thusly: "Just as the sun, guided by its own internal laws, ascends from morn till noon, and passing beyond the noon descends towards evening, leaving behind its splendor, and then sinks completely into the all-enveloping night, thus, too, does mankind follow his course according to immutable laws, and also sinks, after his course is completed, into night, in order to rise again in the morning to a new cycle in his children." The bleakness of having to follow a pattern of existence that appears to be predestined for us based on biological, and sociological considerations is very bleak indeed.

Furthermore, though we are often certain of our own destinies, we fail to realize that the whole of human history is rife with the fundamental prospect of meaninglessness. As author Emil Cioran rightly stated in *A Short History of Decay*, "Whereas all beings have their place in nature, man remains a metaphysically straying creature, lost in Life, a stranger to the Creation. No one has found a valid goal for history; but everyone has proposed one; and in the pullulation of goals so divergent and so fantastic, the notion of finality has been canceled out and vanishes into a mocking clause of the mind."

We may think we have a fundamental purpose, but this is our nature being blinded by the illusion of purposeful choice, and a limitless will. In popular culture it is often suggested that we have every opportunity to express this will in such a way that very few obstacles can prevent its manifestation. This, of course, is a false way of looking at things, because the fact of the matter is that the will is extremely limited to our peculiar stations in life. We may have some gamble of a chance to improve our conditions, but this is not without a sacrifice of personal freedom in conformity to those regulations imposed on us by society.

Carl Jung recognized that there was something unique in humanity, however, and I think that this relates specifically to our desire to create meaning. For, as he put it, "Man is, indeed, mortal, but there are some who are immortal, or there is something in us which is immortal." Perhaps this immortality lies in the distinction that we possess in our minds that allows us to perceive a life that is not wholly devoted to instinct alone. What I mean by this is that our very thoughts regarding existence, and our ability to choose, provides a sort of generational immortality that is found in our shared nature.

Though we are wholly limited by our perceptions, position in life, status in society, and shared nature, we are propelled toward greatness through the questioning of this so-called reality of being. To clarify, I mean that the mere act of putting into question the foundational principles of sociological, psychological, and individual perceptions allow us to experience some derived meaning from meaninglessness. It is with great sorrow, trepidation, and personal anguish that I must admit the purposelessness of existence. Nonetheless, I find it imperative that my own expression of the will be set as free as possible within my own limitations.

Which brings us to the next question, which is whether we can determine the limits of free will. I believe that we can, and this is evidenced by the arc of how much we are able to influence the outside world based on our limited access to choices. There is not a single principle of being which can suggest that there exists some fundamental consequence-free

form of the will which can openly manifest those fantasies or whims we possess in their entirety. We are observably limited, and it is only through absurdity that we can suggest otherwise.

By determining our own limits, through methods such as applying logic through the medium of writing, we can better come to know ourselves, and our place in the world. This does not mean that there is no outlet whereby at least some of our desires can become manifested through personal effort. My work is not an argument against this possibility. What I am simply attempting to do here is to strongly argue for our limitations imposed upon us by various sources. A side argument I will be presenting is that our freedom is skewed by the forces of circumstance. These two concepts combine to eliminate all doubts as to whether we possess true liberation of being.

Be as it may, we are locked into a sort of prison by our own sentience regarding the will, and freedom as well. This prison is inescapable, and only fully resolved through the experience of death, of which I will speak only a little. My previous work, *Reflections on Death, Suicide, and Ethical Euthanasia* more than adequately addresses these topics in a necessarily detailed way.

Returning to the concepts discussed here, we must be willing to entertain the idea that we can find a form of freedom through the reimagining of moralistic, idealistic, and dogmatic approaches to the sovereignty of the individual. Though we are bound to the defeatism of the knowledge gained through the realization of our limits, we are paradoxically also emboldened by the possibility of freedom within our constraints. This freedom is, of course, also limited by our circumstances, and can only be satisfied in death, but it provides a basis whereby life can be experienced in a more satisfactory (at least philosophically) way.

Introduction

When we begin to question the world around us, there is a possibility that there can exist a change that comes to the individual instantaneously. The shackles of mental slavery release themselves from us, and we are then free to realize our lack of freedom. Paradoxically, we are in a position where we are forced to see our limitations as they exist in our daily lives. Regardless of this realization, we must continue to fight for a more nuanced understanding of our predicament. This is the essence of a life that is lived.

The will is structured in the world as a device whereby the illusion of choice is manufactured. We are taught from a very young age to buy into the concept that the world is our oyster, so to speak, and that the limitations we have are of our own manufacturing. This couldn't be further from the truth, however, because as we shall see, the will is limited by time, space, position, and other factors which interrupt our lives continuously.

John Stuart Mill, in his famous work *Utilitarianism*, puts it thusly: "The ultimate sanction, therefore, of all morality (external motives apart) being a subjective feeling in our own minds, I see nothing embarrassing to those whose standard is utility, in the question, what is the sanction of that particular standard? We may answer, the same as of all other moral standards - the conscientious feelings of mankind. Undoubtedly this sanction has no binding efficacy on those who do not possess the feelings it appeals to; but neither will these persons be more obedient to any other moral principle than to the utilitarian one."

Morality is subject to agreed upon principles, and so is the expression of the will. If most human beings were able to accept this fact, then we would be in a position where there would be a perceived need for change. To be more precise, the change that is perceived would allow for augmentations of morality in a way that could either maximize, or minimize, our practice of the will in any capacity. This line of thinking does

not recognize the utility of dogmatism outside of the usefulness it might have to impress upon the masses the foundations which have thus changed to accommodate novel ideals.

Each one of us has a limited set of choices that is reflected in the desire to exercise a perceived freedom of choice. This is recognizable in an unlimited number of examples in our daily lives. We cannot cross the street until the light has changed, for we will surely find ourselves on the wrong end of someone's bumper. Similarly, we cannot choose to ignore popular morality in practice, for if we do, we can find ourselves incarcerated. These are general examples, but their simplicity should not be mistaken for false equivocation. They are direct, and to the point.

We are in a position where our practice of the will is limited in that we often face consequences of one type or another. This is something that can be accepted, but it must also be applied to the minutiae of every action we attempt because we are defined by those boundaries that exist outside of ourselves. There are, as a matter of fact, different types of boundaries, some of which present themselves on a psychological or sociological basis. Internal mental boundaries are designed to either satisfy some inner subconscious limitation that is programmed within us, or to keep us from discovering the horrors of said limitation from sabotaging our primal instinct to survive.

There is within each one of us a choice to make that even a limited will shall permit; namely, that of the decision to build a new foundation on ideals that are not necessarily orthodox. By doing this, a meaning can be created in the fathomless void that is consciousness. We cannot control (for the most part) our comings, and goings, especially when related to death (unless through euthanasia, or suicide), but we can control the sphere of influence our minds possess over objective reality. In my book Contemplations on Liminal Opposition and Dialectics, I describe the position we find ourselves in when unifying the unconscious subjective with the objective realities as being necessary for advancement in self-empowerment.

This necessity is based on the concept that all known orthodox foundations provide scarce connections to reality, other than those affiliated with science. The objective reality can be influenced by the unconscious experience through the creation of ideas, ideals, sociological manifestations of language, and natural law. These experiences, albeit internal, become external through the adoption of new ideas that mold human interactions. Whole societies are based on this premise because everything that exists socially is either foundational, or arbitrary.

Principles provide a means by which we can build logical ends from. This is found in the determinist position that mankind overall has historically been the starting point for entire civilizations. Regardless of whether there is a usefulness to principle, it must be admitted that it creates a foundation whereby solidified ideals can be nurtured. If there is any truth to the human experience beyond shared logical premises, and natural law, it is to be found in the unique way that we create shared ideals.

How can we express our will when we are tied down by circumstance? This question has a plausible answer, which is relevant to our discussion at length. The will is limited (in the best possible scenario) with the ability to change the trajectory of self-sufficiency. There is little that can be done beyond this, although our ideas we express can influence the outside world to a degree as well. This creates a paradoxical situation whereby we are legitimately without a true sense of freedom. To clarify, I mean that though we can enhance, and augment our realities to include the most beneficial outcomes for the self. What I am also indicating is that we realistically can hope only for a limited form of slavery to the laws of nature, and circumstance.

This sounds like a grimly painted picture, but it is a logical one, because it demonstrates that we only have control over conditions relative to the self (in terms of basic decision making only). Sometimes we must admit that we are subject to forces greater than ourselves, even if it means that this force is simply other people. Whether there are states of

consciousness outside of the need for a causal relationship to the body is beyond the scope of this essay.

It is important to outline the significant factors that influence the expression of the will. The self, being a construct of consciousness as we experience it, allows us to possess a sense of auto-sufficiency proportional to our station in this world. To break this down, I propose that our sense of independence in terms of decision making is based on our beliefs regarding the self. This is not entirely so, as there is a force in our nature which is based on primitive instinct. Both realities need to be seen for what they are, and be allowed to be fully realized in each one of us.

Suppression of either instinct, or foundational belief serves very little to us other than sabotaging our ownership of what few liberties we possess. The sooner we realize this limitation, the quicker we can maximize the obvious liberties given to us by nature. In this spirit, let us consider that the self, though a construct, is foundational in nature, and necessary for us to reach toward a nominal sense of freedom. If we entertain the idea in this manner, we can then propose that it is responsible of us to maximize those self-directed freedoms endowed to us.

Aspects of the limited will become manipulated through popular ideas, in the arena of idea sharing known as culture. Our reliance on culture is something of an aberration, for the ideals created by the self are minimized for the popular outcomes directed through well-accepted ideas. What I mean by this is that there is an obvious benefit to relying on culture, even though it damages our internal sense of freedom. This is an awakened form of captivity in nature, where the individual realizes that freedoms are conditional until the hour of death.

Certain ideals enter the popular realm without benefiting the individual the most. These ideals can be related to religious belief, political awareness, or socio-economic considerations.

When we recognize our limitations, we can maximize the utility of our restricted will. We must do this in a way that is based on an

interdependence on one another to socialize, and normalize those ideals that originate from the self. For, as John Stuart Mill states in his work *Utilitarianism*, that "Not only does all strengthening of social ties, and all healthy growth of society, give to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others; it also leads him to identify his feelings more and more with their good, or at least with an even greater degree of practical consideration for it."

Mill argues here that consideration for the wellbeing of others creates a means whereby our personal growth is simultaneously achieved. This lessens the suffering experienced through a realization of our limited nature, especially relating to the expression of the will. Through consideration of others, the self is nourished on a fundamental level. The experience of suffering, being blunted to a degree, becomes thusly tolerable, and almost necessary to the expression of those rare moments of 'free' (though dearly paid for) will.

Utility here is based on practical matters in relation to others, such as a concern for the expansion of individual rights. In my previous work, *Reflections on Death, Suicide, and Ethical Euthanasia*, I argued at length that when we expand individual rights, we create a new foundation of being necessary for any sort of dignity to be had. This new foundation is sourced from the ideal that each one of us possesses an autonomy worthy of expression, even if that is done in a limited fashion.

Nonetheless, though we are bound by our limitations so intimately, we manifest an almost instinctual nature toward the expansion of those precious few rights we possess. By manifesting this primitivism in the causal world, we simultaneously extol those ideals of self-autonomy.

Chapter One

The Claims Surrounding the Will, and Aesthetics.

The will is limited, and this is self-evident through logical thought. This can be determined simply by observing our own position in the world. While this may be a depressing line of thinking, it nonetheless must be explored further because of the evidence available to us. Now that we are assuming the basis for our line of thought, let us consider that all things that exhibit even the most primitive forms of sentience are understood to be as limited as us. We are in a world of limitations.

These limitations are what allow us to maintain a sense of grounding in this very bleak of worlds, because it reminds us continually of our fragility. What I mean by this is that there is a sense here of emptiness that springs forth from the concept of our mental slavery to this world. Some things we simply cannot do because of our station in life, others because of grave consequences outside of our control. Perhaps our freedom is limited so that we become thoroughly exhausted by life before our deaths take place. Imagine always having access to all things, and the madness that would ensue from this. Dying would not seem like the blessing that it is.

Nonetheless, regardless of our lack of access to all things, we surprisingly find ourselves most willing to live despite the gravity of the situation. This is the enigma of humanity, in that we continue regardless of our impairments, unless it proves to be too much even for our sturdy forms to handle. We simultaneously underestimate, as well as overestimate our ability to thrive amidst the weeds of life. If we were to have some sort of true knowledge of our abilities, perhaps this too would also drive us to insanity. There is a touch of pessimism in my writing, but I assure you it is informed by a desperation to find meaning (perhaps where there is none).

The great writer E.F. Benson, in the short story *The Room in the Tower*, creates a magnificent example of the horrors that exist when we are experiencing things seemingly out of our control. Each day becomes a nightmare, whereby we are forced to do those things we have always done,

without recourse to a change in scenario. Like the protagonist in the story, it is as if we are in a dream where nothing changes save for minute details that perhaps were always there before we noticed them. We are forced to enter our own room in the tower, because our will is bound up by the principle inherent in the slavery of existence.

Our nightmare has an end, and that is death of course, but in the interim, we are mere puppets of our casual existence. We can find solace however from the fact that there are some things within our scope of control. I, for example, find myself possessing the acute willpower to write these words, and set down my thoughts on paper. No one is forcing me to do this, yet I feel impelled by some unknown force of the self to continue. Being a writer is not necessarily the best example of a self-directed will in that only some can relate to the experience, but it is a decent one which can be applied to other walks of life.

There are those who are compelled to create works of art, and build lumbering towers of awe-inspiring magnificence, while others are contented with the prospect of having a beer in silence. The profane, and the sublime merge as one in the principle of the exercising of the will when directed toward the self. Perhaps this is the true connection to the unconscious mind; in that, we are compelled to do something, regardless of the expression in the outcome.

Meaning can be found in so many varieties that it almost loses its perceived value. What I mean by this is that meaning, as a concept, loses its depth of importance in the big scheme of things. If we cannot create meaningful experiences through a principle of the will, we cannot find the strength to carry on. Even with a theoretically purposeless existence there is a sense of self-willed direction that satisfies some temporal need.

Our society is focused on nourishing a myth regarding the will, and that is the illusion of unbridled freedom. We do not wish to see just how limited we are in our ability to express ourselves fluently. This lack of control leads to an existential despair that is universally felt, though

described differently by each one of us. The ties that keep us bound to one another lie in our nakedness before eternity. Our nakedness humbles us inadvertently in that we are continuously exposed to one another through said limitations.

These myths are powerful, and often cannot be easily undone by new ideals springing forth through an evolutionary cycle. What was once orthodoxy, now becomes a figment of the imagination. Nonetheless, we are one, and all, influenced by the crashing waves of mythology as a safety net for our childlike lack of understanding of the world around us. Nothing can prepare us for the true cosmic void of non-existence, however. Our flailing of limbs threatens nothing in this cold, causal world, save our own lives in our recklessness of action.

Though we are bidden to do those things which we are forced to do out of mere survivalist tendencies, we find ourselves amid a great divide between want, and desire. The more we desire, the more we become miserable in our quest for some unknown future we will never see. Still, we continue with the flailing of our limbs into the great cosmic void ahead of us. These musings may seem like abstractions, but think deeply about them, for they live in you as much as they do in myself.

Returning to *The Room in the Tower* we observe that there is a parallel between mythology, and unconscious processes. It is through nightmare experiences that we realize the monotony of existence, and it is manifested through the abstractions we devise in our minds. All horrors exist because of internalizations of cold, hard experience. Our lives are full of examples as to how this comes about, especially in those experiences of loss, grief, and perceived trouble of all kinds. This is to be expected in life, but it is apparent to us only when we realize the futility of seeking an unconditional sort of freedom that doesn't exist.

We should look at the will as being subject to our station in life. By this, I mean that we can maximize our understanding of how we can best express the will through an honest observation of reason. This observation

allows us to center ourselves in such a way that our ability to function on a basic level is maximized. Doing this allows us to penetrate the very heart of what it means to be human, because we are brought to our knees in the awe-inspiring magnitude of the crushing power life has over us. By seeing things this way, we allow ourselves to concentrate on those few things that we have control over.

Dr. Sigmund Freud provides a keen insight into the origin of the realization of man's limitation in that, according to him "Primitive man was as incapable of imagining and realizing his own death as any one of us are today. But a case arose in which the two opposite attitudes towards death clashed and came into conflict with each other, with results that are both significant and far reaching. Such a case was given when primitive man saw one of his own relatives die, his wife, child, or friend, whom he certainly loved as we do ours; for love cannot be much younger than the lust for murder. In his pain he must have discovered that he, too, could die, an admission against which his whole being must have revolted, for every one of these loved ones was a part of his own beloved self."

These words come from the book *Reflections on War and Death*, and they ring true especially when thinking about the implications of the awareness it requires. What we see within ourselves is a manifestation of how we perceive others. This interconnectedness does not diminish our own individuality (however feeble that might be), but it does require us to cooperate in such a manner as to maximize our own rights inadvertently.

This focus on individual rights has been examined at length in my work *Reflections on Death, Suicide, and Ethical Euthanasia*, but it is here that I will elucidate my own views on how the will is connected to this concept. You see, we are compelled by our very nature to explore the limits of the will through unconscious idealism, sociology, and psychological means. By doing this we increase our ability as individuals to perceive the world from an honest standpoint.

From a sociological standpoint, we must also question other manifestations of the objective world in which we live. This brings us to the following question: how does social media, and advertising, affect perception on the will? Though this appears to be a meta form of a side topic to discuss, we shall see that this question is intimately contextualized with the expression of the will from a personal standpoint.

Social media is a manifestation of the inner thoughts of individuals as well as a conduit for interactivity, and the exchanging of ideas. This is a medium that speeds up the process of interaction to a level that is focused heavily on the nature of unconscious, as well as conscious activities. We are emboldened by the sudden exchange of ideas, philosophies, and multimedium expressions of the inner thoughts of mankind. This is one way of viewing social media as a tool whereby we can solidify those few things we have control over in our lives.

Advertising flashes before our eyes through several means, all of which have the intent on distracting us with temporal things. This is alright, because any distraction can provide a minor respite from the cold realizations that we are faced with. It is certain that we are adrift in a strange planet, forced to fend for ourselves, and bereft of any solidity to our dogmas. Regardless, we must carry on for our very nature is in a delicate battle with the will to live, and the death drive.

Both social media, and advertising provide digital means by which the exchange of ideas, goods, and information can intersect in a way that is tremendously powerful in our lives. This intersection is complex, and full of nuance, of course, but it is also primarily necessary for us to carry on with this life. By recognizing the influence that these factors have on our lives we can better understand those limitations which serve to shackle us to the outside world. At the end of the day, we are forced to confront those aspects of all our consumptions in a highly personal way.

Looking to the past allows us to envision the future from an individual perspective. When we consider our recollections of life from

past experiences, we are then able to see just how much we are at the mercy of circumstance. Think back to those times when you were forced to do the will of another, and remember that your will does not reign supreme. Just as we are engaged in the present, we have a complex path created from a past as unique as we are.

Let us recall the words of Dr. Freud, in relation to the lack of control we have over our lives. He says that for man, "In his pain he must have discovered that he, too, could die, an admission against which his whole being must have revolted, for every one of these loved ones was a part of his own beloved self." Our lack of control is cemented with our interconnectedness with others. We experience a paradox of self-willed internal experiences that are inclusive of those actions which influence the lives of others. In a sense, we are isolated, and entrenched in those interlacing elements of others simultaneously.

This is a painful way to look at things, because though it universalizes our ability to relate to the world, it does not provide solace for the sufferings we are prone to experience internally. We must come to terms with the idea that we are complex individuals with a sentience that is peculiar to humankind. Once we do this, we will then find that our acceptance of other principles, such as that of a limited will, becomes easier to digest.

Every man, and woman experiences a crucible of internal complex emotions which attempt to reconcile the unknown with the known. The extent of our will is unknown, though we can approximate it to a degree. Nonetheless, we are in the middle of a great psychological revolution of thought which allows us to question our foundations. Perhaps this is necessary for us to evolve further in our understanding of our own lives. If it is not necessary, it is at least an option for us to consider; that we are evolving through this psychological revolution.

We cannot control situations a great deal of the time, but we can choose how we judge the situation. As Epictetus in his work, the

Enchiridion so boldly states that "When you see a man shedding tears in sorrow for a child abroad or dead, or for loss of property, beware that you are not carried away by the impression that it is outward ills that make him miserable. Keep this thought by you: 'What distresses him is not the event, for that does not distress another, but his judgement on the event.' In the depths of our understanding of our own natures, it is imperative that we always recognize our judgment.

We can choose to react to our predicament in a stoic way, never letting ourselves become swayed by any extreme emotion. This is, of course, easier said than done, but nothing was ever accomplished without some degree of effort. Regardless of our approach, let us now consider that there is an inner thirst for freedom found within each one of us. This inner thirst is potent, powerful, and ever looming over our daily lives. As we consider this perception of life, we can better accept our position in this world.

Epictetus was keenly aware that humans are only aware of themselves insofar as they are willing to admit that our judgment toward the uncontrollable must be neutral. This is not to say that emotions have no place in our journey toward understanding ourselves better. What I am simply trying to convey is that it is a third person view of life that allows for new theories of pursuing the will to occur. We may not be able to control many things, but we can (at least) project those ideas of which I speak so crudely.

Our emotional state, if controlled to a sufficient degree, allows us to pursue reason, and logic. Reliance upon these principles further engages us in an internal dialogue that no longer fears discussing the abstract. Our will is abstract in that it is often projected from our internal states with only some of the unrealized desires conforming to reason, and logic. When we apply both principles, we can look more objectively at our own selves in the interim. This benefits us ultimately, for there is no better way to understand ourselves aside from acute observation, and detachment.

It is within the same pages that Epictetus implores us to "Ask not that events should happen as you will, but let your will be that events should happen as they do, and you shall have peace." We can come to a sort of peace with our unfree position in life, especially if we recognize that our will must be shackled by events that are beyond our control. By doing this, we open ourselves to a greater understanding of those internal processes that sabotage us in our time of need. We are our own worst enemy.

As we continue down the logical path of thought by recognizing our limitations, we learn (slowly) to accept those events which seem inevitable to us. For instance, death is but one example of a necessary event that will most definitely happen. This is natural. Just as this is born from nature, we are compelled to follow those situations which force us to act in a limited manner. This could be a way of seeing us as pawns in some game which represents the outside world. We have a certain pattern to our movements, but are limited by the dimensions of whatever foundation we find ourselves clinging to.

Still, we must admit that despite our inability to act in a completely free way, we are always reliant upon a foundation of sorts. This foundation is informed by the works of society, ideological considerations, and the complexities of interaction between individuals versus the larger group. These forces combine to mark an exceedingly complex form of functioning which demands nothing less than complete obedience to its orthodoxy. Our personal ideals, dreams, and thoughts become irrelevant when another set of principles is accepted by most others.

We can function to a degree in our own sense of individuality, but even this is grossly limited to our station in life. As personal individuality, and group behavior contrast with each other, there is a great connection between them both. The group is based on a solidified set of ethics, and morals that are accepted by enough individuals as to cement it into the consciousness of most. Personal individuality is driven by inner workings

which sometimes are allowed to be expressed with some degree of freedom.

Aesthetic concerns are necessary to consider when discussing the will, because it is desire that informs us of our potential. By looking at art as something that manifests from the unconscious, we can see inklings of what our limitations consist of. Everything we desire in the fantastical world of the artistic becomes possible. Those possibilities are often detached from the real objective world, in that they are usually not possible to completely fulfill. This seems like a paradox, but it is not.

I do not mean that when we look at a realist painting that we are seeing anything more than an observation of normal objective life. Realism is very mathematical, and exacting in its portrayal of hyper-realism. We could, of course, see into it from a view to the unconscious, allowing us to think up countless possibilities of meaning. Regardless of how we choose to view it, art, which works through aesthetics, informs our consciousness through unconscious processes.

Human beings are unique in that we seek out the novel in life to the degree that we create mythologies from it. Our abstractions are not without purpose, however, in that we are confronted with the absurd to make sense of our helplessness in the face of conformity. The absurd is often fantastical. This is no coincidence, in that there is a purpose behind the abstractions we express through culture, art, and the visual in general. We adorn ourselves in clothing to express our moods, thus placing a visuospatial marker to those indelible feelings we possess in our hearts.

The aesthetic is powerful in that it rules every aspect of our lives, often in subtle ways that cannot be readily detected. Each expression of an artistic nature is a cry out to the void whereby we are forced to confront the anguish of our frailty. No matter how absurd the subject matter, there is always truth behind the artistic. What this truth represents is a contrasting look into the disparities between desire, and fulfillment. In the twilight of our dreams lay an incredible possibility that is unknowable.

When we examine a sculpture, or a piece of art, we see the truth. This truth is within us in a fundamental way because it is revealed as we realize how temporal we truly are. All these abstractions have some place in objective reality because they are based on the conceptualizations inherent in the inner workings of the mind. This is a powerful idea, particularly because it forces us to accept the idea that the reason art is so potent is due to our dedication to the impossible. As we realize this, we can follow logic, and reason, to a point of acceptance in our inability to control life.

Art provides a sort of (seeming) immortality to it, even though all semblance of its creation will be buried when humanity is done for. What I mean by this is that we externalize our focus onto a platform that is not restricted to our own limitations, and by doing this project this desperation onto a longer-lived form. Our thoughts are passing by with very little constancy, but a created artwork can solidify those abstractions in a way that is impossible through logic alone. This is the great tragedy of humanity; in that we are bound to our canvases insofar as our will is buried by circumstances beyond our control.

Desperation forces us to confront those inner demons of the psychological realm. Note that there is a powerful emanation coming from the aspect of art that focuses on the fantastical. It is from the unconscious fantastical that we bring light to the shadow of our consciousness. By doing this we can cure our ignorance of who we truly are by revealing our weaknesses to our own selves. There is no magic behind this because it is based on a psychological foundation. It is demonstrable through the evidence we leave behind in the language of art.

Chaos in the world influences the creation of art as well because it forces each one of us to contemplate the unknown before us. Each second that passes in our lives is a moment in time lost to a crippled, and limited will. This seems bleak, and it is, but there is no other way I can sufficiently describe the impact that art has on us. Of course, this is merely a theory, but it is based on the logical conclusions that have brought me thus far in my work.

The will, limited though it may be, is expressed through art abundantly. Leonardo da Vinci, in his work a *Treatise on Painting*, describes art in the following comparison to a mirror, thusly; "An image exhibited in a mirror does always participate of the color thereof, and the mirror is reciprocally tinged with the color of the image it exhibits. These do still borrow more, the one of the other, as the color of the object is stronger than that of the mirror and the image will ever appear more vivid, and perfect in its color, as that is nearer and more akin to the color of the mirror." A parallel can be drawn here, though the original intention was to simply illustrate how images are viewed in a mirror for the purposes of painting with accuracy.

This parallel is found in the unconscious mind, with the principles of the will maximized for the individual. The unconscious mind is likened to a mirror. The will is the color that appears to be the same in the mirror as it is in objective reality. Our will reflects the desire of the individual in that it mimics unconscious processes, and dreams. We are ourselves reflections of our own mental world, whereby all things appear possible even when they are not.

What we can see in the three dimensions we are a part of is a fraction of those possibilities that will never be expressed by the will. How many ideas, thoughts, emotions, and desires have been sidelined because of circumstance? Perhaps there are countless enumerations of those things which only exist in the minds of human beings.

Conceivably we are victims of an all-encompassing unconscious mind which demands from us those things which can never be fulfilled. Our own sense of hell then includes the demands of the unconscious. The unknown, and uninvestigated becomes our torment amid our natural ignorance. In the abyss of our lack of knowledge, we are determined to follow the call of our primitive nature in the quest for freedom. By settling into this mindset, it becomes possible to form a more complete vision of the psyche as it applies to individuals. The mind, and the objective work in tandem to provide a well-rounded perception of reality.

Our perception of free will is tied in with the cultural milieu of the time in which we live. As of the time of this writing (the early 21st century), there is a great deal of confusion as to the limits of individual freedoms. In the western world, we are continuously fed with the messages of freedom regardless of how well grounded we are. There is a disconnect from reality that positions itself in the middle of our lives, encroaching upon us in a never-ending way that is as oppressive as it is filled with ignorance.

Technology promises to offer all sorts of comforts, but these are merely additional distractions that we did not possess in the years preceding our time. Instantaneous information, the tracking of movement, and the enforcement of limitations on speech are but a few of the ways in which we are being controlled even more than ever. If anything, there should be a greater *awareness* of what limits or oppresses us, but there appears to be very little in this way. With our greater access to information there are many people who are content with knowing very little. This is a severe problem which cannot be easily solved.

One way in which we can resolve our inattention to reality is the confrontation with our own mortality. If we were to be educated from a young age on those scientific facts surrounding death, then we would be able to have a more sober view on things in our daily lives. This does not mean that we will be able to erase all ignorance as to our predicament, but it does provide some form of solution to an ever-growing problem. Regardless of how we approach this, it is important to remember that it is through death that our limitations resolve themselves.

Sobering information aside, we must be willing to have the courage to step forward and take ownership of our limitations. We may be enslaved to circumstance, but many of us have a choice as to whether we suffer as much as we do. A stoic view could engage us in such a way as to allow for there to be a greater humility before the towering influence of a discordant existence. Our existence in this world is filled with choices that are not ours, despite our greatest efforts to make it ours. This is another paradox that exists, if only because we are as sentient as we are.

True freedom is found in the resignation of the will to one's station in life. This does not mean that we should not struggle against those things which we cannot change (perhaps the struggle itself holds meaning), but we should allow ourselves to leave our preconceived notions of freedom behind us. By seeing things in this manner, we are philosophically building new foundations whereby we can challenge ourselves to live authentically. Authenticity, in this regard, is welcomed through positive action toward the expansion of those qualities we possess that enhance our ideal of freedom.

We must be willing to look at things from an abstract point of view, particularly as it relates to our own desires. What we cannot experience, we can communicate to others our dissatisfaction with a life that lacks opportunities beyond a peculiar scope. Whether we will be heard or understood is to be determined, as our predicament is so generic as to minimize our own sense of importance, or even real identity. Philosophically, there is an annihilation of the self that occurs when we find ourselves at the demanding realities of the world around us.

As we consider the possibility that our very presence on this Earth is arbitrary, and a result of many improbable outcomes that happened to take place, we can better see where we truly are. By changing our point of view to include the outside world as it perceives us, we enter a state of pure abstraction that offers deeper insights into the nature of the unconscious mind.

Returning to the concept of the drive to survive found in our primitive natures, we must also consider our death drive. As described in prior works, I have outlined those parallels which exist between the unconscious, and conscious minds. Some of these parallels are regarding self-willed action, while others relate specifically to how we express ourselves on a fundamental level. Regardless of what the focus is, we must recognize that there are extant opposites in our minds that control how we think, feel, and express ourselves. Perhaps these oppositions exist to obscure the truth from all; that we are destined for the grave without mercy, or favoritism in nature.

Chapter Two

How Culture Informs our Perception of Freedom.

"Civilized society, which demands good conduct and does not bother about the impulse on which it is based, has thus won over a great many people to civilized obedience who do not thereby follow their own natures. Encouraged by this success, society has permitted itself to be misled into putting the ethical demands as high as possible, thereby forcing its members to move still further from their emotional dispositions. A continual emotional suppression is imposed upon them, the strain of which is indicated by the appearance of the most remarkable reactions and compensations." - *Reflections on War and Death*, Sigmund Freud.

In my previous work*, Reflections on Death, Suicide, and Ethical Euthanasia*, I proposed the concept that society is foundationless when it comes to recognizing its own limitations. We are caught between the expectations that society imposes on us, and the individual identity that we construct for ourselves. We continuously search for purpose in those ritualistic impositions of society in issues relating to how to live, how to work, and how to die. Very few changes are capable of being initiated that are foundation breaking. Those changes I am referring to take generations to augment in such a manner as to show its manifestations in a noticeable way.

Dr. Freud states that society has permitted itself to be misled in a way that does not allow for an expression of one's own nature. What this indicates is a focus on the arbitrarily enforced ideals of society that cripples our dedication to following what limited will we possess. All these things are intimately connected, inclusive of the will, because what we sacrifice for society is nothing less than our theoretical souls. By soul, I mean the basis for our composition of the self through experience, and ideology. This soul is a self-created manifestation of the limitations we are forced to work through.

Freedom is based on the dispensation of it given to us by society. We are at the mercy of culture, and established boundaries regardless of how we would prefer it to not be this way. Those who are cognizant of this lack of control perhaps are closer to finding some form of liberation in a conformist universe. Our entire cosmology of being is tied in with those few liberties given to us by 'civilized' society. We can express a limited form of the will, but only in a way that conforms to the approval of an unspoken authority.

These limitations of freedom possess us to fight continuously for our own conceptualizations of being. We are always finding ourselves in the battle for a lasting conception of the self, though we continuously fail. This does not stop people from seeking out the self, for there are many who have come before us that have kept these ideas in mind until very timely deaths in old age. Perhaps this is what could be termed wisdom because it allows for a dispensation of that prescribed freedom which fuels our inner desire for liberation.

What we are not given by society through its choice to recognize some freedoms over others is the permission to think for ourselves. We are bombarded on a constant basis with the prospect of manufactured freedom that we forget our potential for true freedom found within. This sounds abstract, and in a way, it is, but it is based on the logical conclusions found in how we interact with the rest of our culture.

Of course, we cannot simply afford to use a reductionist view of culture versus individualism, but we can at least entertain this idea with a mind focused on finding some profound knowledge. What I mean by this is that even though the concepts I am describing are based on raw observations rather than looking at a multifaceted set of conditions that lead up to those objective situations we are placed in. Regardless of where we find ourselves, we are responsible for viewing things from several angles to find the truth.

Our perception of freedom is informed by a parasitic relationship between society, and individualism. We are codependent on the machinations of socially acceptable behavior, as well as the main functioning of cultural manifestations in society. This parasitism digs into the very heart of the struggles of mankind, as we attempt to solve the seemingly impossible questions of purpose, and meaning. It is safe to say that we will be struggling for a long time hence as we find ourselves lost in the maelstrom of a muddled persona.

This line of thinking has an inkling of pessimism to it, but it is also informed by the conceptualization of how we can expand those limited freedoms we do have. In a sense, my reasoning is not wholly pessimistic at all. In fact, although it is not diametrically opposed to such a conclusion, it is grounded in the possibility that we are experiencing a form of hell by merely existing. This possibility is strong enough for us to at least be required to question those outcomes that we have been set up to experience, and perceive.

The truth of the matter is that we are lost in a soup of ideology, conceptualizations, and taken-for-granted objectivism. These notions are intertwined, as previously mentioned, because they are equally dependent on the practice of another. Without a strong ideology, there is only the bare acceptance of facts as they appear to us. Without objectivism, there are only the subjective ideas that are conceptualized by our brains in such a manner as to control our very foundational views on life.

Nonetheless, we must continue to fight on, and reach new heights in our quest for knowledge. Though we may forever remain in ignorance of the truth of our existence, we can rely on a juxtaposition between the scientific, and the subjective individual, simultaneously. This appears to be more difficult to conceive of than it is, because it requires an individual to cultivate an awareness beyond simple living.

The fear of death keeps us from realizing our full potential. It also blinds us to the concept that we may be fully responsible for creating our

own meaning in this experience we call life. All that we know is this world in which our bodies inhabit, and the interior conceptualizations of the subjective mind. The inner workings of mankind have evolved alongside the rational, and objective idealisms regarding the experience of living.

We are continually in the process of movement, both physically and mentally. In some ways we are prepared to step outside of our comfort zones, and penetrate the depths of some of our greater mysteries. In other ways, we are hopelessly lost adrift a torrential ocean of questions without answers. Somewhere between either of these ways rests the foundational stones of our perception of being. When we allow ourselves to meet at the crossroads of our inner conflicts, we are better prepared to face the possibility of meaninglessness.

Whether we possess any deeper meaning other than what we ascribe to our own lives remains to be seen. Perhaps it cannot ever be known because of its reliance on the subjective rather than the objective. This line of reasoning makes a degree of sense because it freely admits that there is an impenetrable boundary between the causal, and acausal. I speak of this at length in my book *Contemplations on Liminal Opposition and Dialectics*.

Speaking of movement, and the intertwined natures of the physical, and mental, we must admit that both have their limitations. The physical is limited to what we know about movement through logical deduction, and mathematical exactness. It is reliant on the objectively known through physical observance, and tested theories. In short, it is what we know to be true. The subjective mentality is focused heavily on the nature of the inner workings of the self. The subconscious resides here, and it is part, and parcel, of how we function on a basic level. Without the subjective, or mental, we would not conceptualize as we do. There would be no significance to cultural markers regarding behavior because there would be a void of thought.

The will, being thus constrained, must be expressed in some way. We can take a stance that is wholly deterministic in nature by exclaiming that it

is society that guides the will towards its fruition by the definition provided to us of freedom. We can also see things from a fluid, individualistic manner, in which we find ourselves questioning the very foundations of what we have learned about desire, and liberation of the self. All these concepts are correct in their line of thinking, but each one possesses some drawbacks which must also be discussed.

A major drawback to thinking deterministically is that we are somehow predestined (potentially, at least) to react a certain way when it comes to the expression of the will. On the other hand, we are also confronted with the limitations found in the individualistic approach to life. This approach is based on a merging of the subjective, with the objective of the manipulation of personal desires toward expression as the result. When we examine our nature from both perspectives, we can see truths that exist in each one of these points of view.

Our nature succumbs to the temptations of thinking that our will is at least nearly unlimited. It is not. I have demonstrated thus far how the will is both subject to the objectively established boundaries of society inclusive of the concept that individual perception also affects our reality. This is a difficult concept to describe at any further level because it is one in which demands are placed on us to be flexible in our way of thinking.

Inflexibility is one of those traits of humanity that provides a false sense of security in ideas that can be proven wrong. We are tied down to the objective as much as the subjective because both concepts rule our lives on a fundamental level. Principles must rely on a nuanced view of how things are expressed in this world in relation to human beings. Certainly, our world does not revolve around us, but since we are only sentient in our bodies, we can only know what we know through our observations as humans. We can contemplate what it is like to be a butterfly, but we will never truly know.

It is negligence to rely on the association between the will, and psychological concerns alone. We must be concerned with the fact that the

world revolves around physical action, and observable manifestations. When we consider all three concepts (observation, psychology, and the will) we see a more complete picture that allows us to dissect our purpose more freely. By doing this, we are allowing ourselves to open our minds to the continuously changing sphere of daily life.

Our base level reality is controlled by the physical, as well as the socio-economic, in a way that cannot be easily deciphered. There is an intertwined nature here that pulls to either side those blind spots that we are continuously guilty of relying on. These blind spots are the lack of control that we have over our lives, as well as the mental ignorance we are perpetually manifesting. Both these concepts are powerful in that they are incessantly vying for control over our lack of foreknowledge. This is done by observing those things which are minutiae rather than the 'greater' picture.

Psychology can teach us about the ways that the mind functions in relation to perceived, and spatial objects. It allows for a mental dissection of the facts corresponding to neuroscience as well as even gross anatomy. All these things are intimately connected. What corresponds to something that is perceived as being minor (perhaps a thought in the brain) is a physical characteristic of our own bodies. We are tied into the mental, as well as physical worlds, by logic, reason, and objective truth. Should we decide to acknowledge this, we are then able to better seek out those questions which may have no answer.

The will is observed as being subjective, and only manifested in such a way as not to interfere with the entropy surrounding our lives. This is done by trial and error in a way that is not brought to our conscious awareness. Our subjective mind, connected with the unconscious, is in perpetual battle with the forces of our chaotically ordered world. This is perhaps the true horror of being, in that we are engaged in a conflict that we cannot ever hope to win.

We must be willing to ask hard questions regarding our own use of, and expression of the will. The facts are laid bare before us, but we must be willing to observe them in a way that is detached from our emotional state. By doing this, we are manipulating our own conception of the will to be extended to our conscious mind. In this state of being, the individual is no longer a mere observer in the battle for liberation. He or she is now a participant in the largely unwinnable war.

What is the purpose of all of this? It is that we might possess a greater understanding of our position in the world. Sometimes the simplest explanation is the best one to rely on. We can claim to require complexities that match our level of questioning of reality, but we cannot arrive at the solution without a simple answer. Perhaps we will never approach the truth in this regard, but it follows logic that we should pursue it with some form of organization of our purpose.

Intent aside, we seem to naturally as a species require answers to those questions that are yet unanswered. Of course, this appears to make us look like foolhardy animals without any true sense of the irony that we participate in daily. It is, after all, strange that we pursue the truth for the sake of knowledge even if that knowledge were to hurt us in some way. It is a form of curiosity, but also an expression of the death impulse, whereby individuals investigate those dark abysses of scientific inquiry without batting an eye.

The death impulse is our continuously conflicting spirit we possess to engage ourselves in the truth of our mortality. This conflicting spirit is naturalistic in nature, and is diametrically opposed to the will to live. There is a necessity in us having access to both the death impulse, and the will to live because both serve to inform us of our inner moral compass. This compass is based on these diametrically opposed concepts which are in truth one and the same. It shows that our nature is bound by chaotic forces that manifest themselves in mathematical exactness in our physical world. This further serves to subjugate the will to those aspects of the objective world that would quash our dreams, and ideals.

Chapter Three

The Foundations of Logic in Reference to the Will.

Logic informs us of our ability to perceive the will as a wellspring of possibilities. When we focus on reason, logic, and mathematical conceptualizations of thought, we are compelled to seek out those things which are profound in nature. This concept seems like it has almost religious overtones, but this is only regarding aesthetic considerations, and superficial comparisons to traditional experiences. What I mean by this is that there is an elevated emotional response in the individual that seeks out the truths behind those things which plagued the earliest of man.

We are no longer able to keep up the charade of knowledge of those things which lie far beyond conventional idealism. To clarify, I mean that from the time of this writing going forward, there is a new epoch of history unfolding before us. It is here in which we will no longer accept the conventional answers we have used to decipher the purpose of life from our ancestors.

Simultaneously, we are struck between the conceptualizations of meaning, and what logic tells us about the nature of our species. We have an objective truth of what we can know based on rational intellectual awakenings. We also have our unconscious mind, fragile though it is, which carries us, and gives us strength to continue living when rationally we know there is a sense of purposelessness hanging over our heads.

All of these must be considered with a depth of purpose that cannot falter from its original intention; that of discovering the liberating aspects of a fractured will. It is tempting to rely wholly on those things which are within our grasp in our quest for self-awareness through knowledge. We, as individuals, find ourselves in a situation of confrontation through experience.

Dr. Freud was very shrewd in his observations that we must find some resolution to the conflict that exists between the intellectual, and the

emotional. In his work, *Reflections on War and Death*, Dr. Freud states that "Students of human nature and philosophers have long ago taught us that we do wrong to value our intelligence as an independent force and to overlook its dependence upon our emotional life." We must be willing to confront our emotional states when processing logical, and rational, concepts that are proven through scientific inquiry. As individuals we possess a rich inner life that is key to understanding the expression of the will as it exists in our daily lives.

Through trial, and error, we narrow down those concepts which elude us in a way that may or may not be satisfactory for us to accept. Some of the most insightful truths only serve to widen those empty spaces of the void that presents itself to our minds. We are in slavery to our own emotional states when we refuse to accept the truth. The rational must be united with those unconscious emotional states present in each one of us because without this unification there can only be chaos. Madness is one step behind discovery when it comes to the scientific, philosophical, and mundane.

It is from the works of Dr. Freud that we discover that there is more than just a tenuous connection between the individual, and objective reality. For us to maintain our semblance of sanity, we must be in constant contact with the rich inner world we possess. Sometimes our fears are hidden in these mental states, and this is hardly alleviated by our discovery of objective truths. Just as the objective is discovered a little at a time, the subconscious mind is explored, and learned of, through continual personal development. Our mental state will never dictate what is objective, but it can shape our acceptance, and understanding of these manifestations. Perhaps this is another way to solidify some expression of liberty within the individual.

Our intellectual abilities are reliant on the foundations of our willingness to view the will as a dispensation of culture, and circumstance. Should we decide to accept these concepts as fact, we are soon to realize that there are several things that we are unable to do regarding the practice

of the will. Our culture informs how we process those ideas which are ingrained within us from an early age. In addition, circumstance adds in a new gamble of experience in that it limits further those prescribed actions we might make.

To complicate things further, it is certain that we are also internally conflicted within ourselves. We do not know where the limitations of will stems from when considering cultural taboos against action. What we have learned we have to do (as opposed to what we will to do) provides nothing but conflict within our idea of personhood. This causes various cultures to have different ideas of how personhood extends beyond the basics of prejudice and other preventative measures against liberty.

Each culture imposes its limitations on top of those limitations that already exist in our projection of the will. These limitations are part historical, and part practical in their expression. What I mean by this is that we are simultaneously informed by what our ancestors have 'always done' in addition to the idea that we must act within a prescribed set of options given to us based on the circumstances at hand. These circumstances are difficult to grasp, but they exist, nonetheless.

When we open ourselves to the concept that culture, psychologically motivated behavior, and interactivity between one another informs our expression of the self, we can move forward intellectually in an honest way. This honesty forms the basis for a new expression of humanism which extends beyond the borders of nation, or culture. Wherever we find ourselves in the world, we are emboldened to action through such a view on life. This view does not require religious belief, but it does demand a personal focus on those things which are well within the realm of science. Our ideas of personal liberty ultimately depend on this.

We are tied, in a psychological manner, intrinsically to culture regardless of how far we have evolved on a personal level to disagree with this fact. Dr. Freud continues in his work to elucidate on this relationship which, according to him, recognizes only obedience (to the state) in a

parent/child dynamic that is sacrificial in nature. This sacrifice stops us in our tracks from progressing further into a recognition of those traits which are perhaps necessary to experience true liberation.

The state, according to Dr. Freud, "demands the utmost obedience and sacrifice of its citizens, but at the same time it treats them as children through an excess of secrecy and a censorship of news and expression of opinion which render the minds of those who are thus intellectually repressed defenseless against every unfavorable situation and every wild rumor." Our unfavorable situations are numerous in that we find ourselves washed away by the tides of circumstance, and ordained action. We are like puppets on a series of strings, dancing along completely rudderless into the void-like spaces of temporal existence.

Ideas, opinions, thoughts, and even those dream-like reveries of the inner mind are anathema if they are not conformist to the state in a totality of being. Therefore, we must seek out an alternative, even if it only exists in our mind, to the mental slavery we are forced to live through. This does not imply that our minds could overthrow our existing systems at all. What this does mean is that our stoic outlook on our condition can provide a modicum of additional liberation for us in our enslaved state.

This all paints a grim picture, but it need not be seen this way in any exclusionary manner. There are small joys to be had in living, though they are highly regulated by outside forces which we all succumb to unconsciously. For us to admit that this is a possibility is a step in the direction of liberating the mind to the extent that it is possible. Viewing our condition stoically improves our internal locus of control to a great degree. Emotional states need to be understood, and regulated in a way that is beneficial to the individual in question. By doing this we are allowing ourselves to become educated on the extent of our frailty in this world.

Since we are dependent on the state for the recognition of our freedoms, we will always be in a state of conflict that is largely internalized. This is, of course, only one angle to look at the bigger problem we are

discussing here which is of the freedom of the will. One angle, portrayed in a way that is largely experiential to me as an individual, but deduced nonetheless through intellectual rationalism. The physical forces of life (i.e., the state) impose themselves on us in a way that limits our will. This is something that can be recognized through mere observance of daily life for random individuals. Not everyone can reach their highest goals, or loftiest dreams always.

Mere fantasy will not allow us to reach the apex of our personal liberty which we are seeking. There is a pathway whereby we can reach into the mental deduction that exists to demonstrate to us what we instinctively already know about life; that it is harmful, limiting, and disdainful of the individual. Flourishing can occur, of course, through psychological practices that are reminiscent of the ideas of Dr. Martin Seligman whose work is a tremendous exploration of what liberates us as individuals. A focus on the positive aspects of the human experience is indeed useful, and authors such as Dr. Seligman should be seen in this light.

It is beneficial to point out that focusing on our limitations, as well as our freedoms, allows us to become mentally balanced. This balance occurs in a way that encourages individuals to not look at life merely as being likened to a glass that is either half full, or half empty. It is what it is. To live courageously, we must be willing to sacrifice our pre-conceived notions of what reality consists of beyond the simple established facts of objectivity.

Our internal mental world is just as important as the physical external objective world. Both worlds allow for an expression of what it means to be uniquely human. Through looking at things in this way, we are seeking out a balance that allows for human flourishing, even if that flourishing is limited by outside forces. This is a fact that we must be willing to live with if we are not to succumb to self-immolation.

We do not know the depths of the ambiguity forced upon us by society, but we can imagine it to a profound degree. Our focus on logic

allows us to categorize situations that occur to us in ways that are founded on reason alone. All things that exist have their utility, particularly those things which relate to our own experiences. Our internal experiences are valid in that they relate to how we perceive those freedoms we do have. These experiences also provide a way that we may live vicariously through our daydreams of existing without limits.

By encouraging our inner minds to become creative, and thus create those artifacts of the human race known as art, we are pulling from our unconscious a form of rebellion against existence. What I mean by this is that art allows the mind to become liberated even when we are shackled by those limitations of existence. We exist in a state that will be devoured by the vacuous when we cease to persist, and end up dying alone. Does our will exist beyond our causal, physical life? We do not know if this is the case, but if it were, then the will would face new laws, and perhaps limitations for all eternity.

These ideas are mere abstractions, but they deal directly with the will by focusing on its manifestation in our daily lives. When we are distracted by those limitations imposed upon us, we fail to see that the will is a concept we all have in common. Everyone faces variances in these limitations, but they exist universally to some degree. What is forbidden for one, may not be for another, depending on who they are in our society. This has always been the case, and is almost a tradition that continues to enslave individuals to this very day.

Our internal worlds are based on the real experiences we face in our daily lives, as well as those categorically fantasy-based ideas which we sometimes lose ourselves in. The fantastical is not rational, but it does serve a purpose; that of comforting us in those times when we would rather not survive to live another day. Our dreams provide aspects of the aspirations we possess, as well as those things which we can never have. This is not merely a melancholic deduction of reasoning, however.

Chapter Four

Our Consciousness as Seen Through the Lens of Perceived Time.

Dr. Carl Jung makes a rather fascinating point regarding love, emotional capabilities, and beauty relating to our conscious experience of these things in his work *Psychology of the Unconscious*. For Dr. Jung, "It is rather the incapacity to love which robs mankind of his possibilities. This world is empty to him alone who does not understand how to direct his libido towards objects, and to render them alive and beautiful for himself, for Beauty does not indeed lie in things, but in the feeling that we give to them." Our consciousness is informed by the entire history of mankind. Love allows us to see our emotional boundaries, and the very limits of the will are apparent here.

We have a choice to impose a feeling on the concept of beauty being seen in things that exist, and concepts of the impermanent. Our view on things beyond our control which may seem terrifying are perhaps lacking only in the context of how we choose to see these things. The view that we may be possibly only capable of expressing our will through limited actions, and a more unlimited imagination provides a way for us to see through the cloudiness that is this existence.

The two concepts must be viewed as being in concert with one another for there to be a coherency in our own ideologies, for there are other ways of viewing this which would only spell doom for the individual. If we were to see ourselves as beings which are in debt to life through a sort of slavery of will, we would not be wrong. What it might do though is influence our psyche to the degree that it will not allow for personal growth because of the gloomy prognosis upon one's own life at stake here. If we give ourselves a chance to recognize our actual freedoms (which are variable, and not universal in nature due to circumstance) then we are able to more fully appreciate those things which give us the opportunity to view our predicament in a light that is not readily apparent through observation.

Emotional maturity allows for a responsible insight into the will. By this I am not attempting to assign any dogmatic reasoning behind the word responsible. I am merely attempting to emphasize the importance that our view on things influences our world to the extent that it redirects itself back onto us psychologically. If we choose to view something which is horrific from an aesthetic or detached point of view, we are fighting the absurdity of our human condition through the one tool we possess: the mind.

It is through the mind that we are forced to contemplate, and assign meaning to arbitrary things, events, and conditions which ultimately impact our knowledge of the human experience. When situations that are adversarial in nature introduce themselves into our lives, we unconsciously assign (through learned processes) meaning to these things. Perhaps we were once able to assign meaning through our own abstractions at a young age, but now as mature adults we are required to shut off that part of our brain in conformity with those things which are taken for granted as being true. The suffering of humanity may never be objectively beautiful, but it can have an aesthetic meaning which transcends the horrific (as we experience it).

All things which affect us in a terrifying way such as diseases, violence against us by other human beings, and other imposed infirmities of the body are no doubt undesirable. How we view these horrifying experiences which are beyond our control is an important lesson here. Finding meaning in the meaningless only serves to provide some level of hope in the liberty which the will promises to us silently through our aspirations. This does not mean that we encourage these terrible situations to occur in any way, nor does it mean we are to enjoy them by any stretch of the imagination. These concepts are tied more in with the nature of how the will strives for complete freedom, but must settle for liberation of the mind in some form.

The unconscious works in tandem with the consciousness of humanity to produce ideas surrounding the will. Our very notion of

freedom depends on our ability to rectify the way we choose to see things with the limited choices we have regarding the will. When the two concepts are united, there is a possibility of healing the internal self which comes into this world fractured, and incomplete. This is not a mere abstraction, but is based on personal observations about life, along with asking questions relating to experience from other people over a period of years.

In my estimation, there is a great value to uniting the stoic with the expression of freedom found in some actions granted to us through the filter of society stemming from the will. To be able to act freely, at least to an extent, and to think even more freely (without prejudice to circumstance), we must be willing to shed ourselves of preconceived notions of good, or bad. Things which happen simply happen. How those things happen are related to circumstance, science, and applied logic.

Nonetheless, we must consider that there are still negative experiences to contend with. Those experiences which are beyond our control, which encroach upon us with a vigor stronger than our wills manifests itself in our lives in a powerfully evident way. Each of us is limited by those things which terrify, and seize us with inaction. This is the nightmare scenario that is in our world. Still, there is a chance of personal redemption through the uniting of the concepts we are dealing with.

All things which require great thought are painfully difficult to complete, and this is evidenced through the titanic works of art, mathematical designs in technology, and conceptual arts such as writing, or observing. The more effort that is placed into the physical actions which manifest created objects (or concepts) the greater the ability of the individual to internally stave off the effects of our nightmare scenario in this world.

Dr. Jung continues in his work, and states that "we, therefore, are forced to conclude that the external object cannot be loved, because a predominant amount of libido prefers a phantastic object, which must be brought up from the depths of the unconscious as a compensation for the

missing reality." The outside world need not be consulted for the instinct present in the expression of the will, regardless of limitations imposed upon it. Our internal conceptualizations provide us with the necessary information for us to piece together those things which are often hidden from us regarding the will. The unconscious provides a space where those missing aspects of our lives manifest themselves most clearly using symbolism.

Our focus here on the symbolic is not designed to create more distractions from the topic at hand, namely the will, but is specifically present due to the need to arrange a sort of union between the unconscious, and conscious minds. This union provides a way for us to reconcile those jarring aspects of the limitations imposed upon our liberties. Whether or not it is ultimately successful is wholly dependent on the individual that views the world in this manner.

The external world, and its objects are manifested in a sort of infirmity of being where there is an impermanence always present in a haunting way. The impermanence of life, the impermanence of social connections, and the impermanence of all things that exist for us impels us to create a union between the seemingly opposing factors of the mind. This union may not represent all those things which we seek, but it is in my estimation that there are possibilities of freedom which we can strive toward in this imperfection.

Perhaps it is fitting that this method of seeing things is based on the imperfect union of disparate states of conceptualizing (the objective, with the subjective) seeing as we have an imperfect experience of daily life. All our imperfections compile upon one another to prevent us from achieving true freedom (if that exists) through the desirous nature of mankind to always be seeking out the external world to control.

The expression of freedom we are talking about originates in primitive reactionary, and sexual manifestations. The imperfections that express themselves in our lives are present as a lesson to our constant

thirsting for liberation. Redemption can, therefore, be seen as a way of uniting the concept of those things under our locus of control, and the stoic views which we assign to those things outside of this sphere.

The sexual impulse comes from the unconscious desire to dominate the spoils of fortune, and do those things which are forbidden by either circumstance or law. This is the primitive force that dwells deep within each one of us, and is placed under control only through those aspects of consciousness, morality, and societal conformity which concern the totality of humanity. It is within this impulse that our drive toward life, as well as our thirst for self-annihilation, finds itself present.

Here, the primitive is present in that the very basis for all action stems from the unconscious desire to experience those things which are beyond our grasp. We continuously thirst for those things outside our locus of control, and it is in this lack of freedom that the great tragedy of humanity is revealed. When we investigate those aspects of the self which act in a contrarian manner to our pre-conceived notions of being, we never fail to become surprised by our lack of knowledge regarding our true selves. We are beginning to find ourselves in a conundrum whereby the actual conflicts with the desirous.

All that we know is found in the mirror's edge of known histories, theories, and facts. Our unconscious selves are deeply impacted by this, and it is vital that we recognize this before we attempt to look deeper into ontology. We are fractured in our individuality, just as we are deeply scarred by the experiences we are forced to go through in a societal setting. These states of imperfection, pain, and inner conflict are necessary for us to experience possessing even a fraction of the knowledge that we seek. There is no magic bullet to solving disease, just as there is no mental state where we can enunciate the balance of the self.

Returning to the *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Dr. Jung posits that "The unconscious contains the differentiated remnants of the earlier psychologic functions overcome by the individual differentiation." Though we are

initially at the mercy of our physiological, and mental growth, we must realize that our notions of freedom originate with the individuation of persona found in each one of us. The maturity of the self is as necessary as those attempts that we make to affect the objective world outside of our individual states. There is no abstraction here either, because the concept I am unveiling relates to the search for the state of balance between the unconscious, and conscious mind.

The unconscious, and conscious mind correlate to the subjective, and the objective respectively. We are hardwired to relate to both states simultaneously, because it is what forms the essence of our consciousness in general. We are bound to our state of individualism to such a degree that we are not even aware just how profound this connection is. Our individual sense of being is intertwined deeply with the need for us to express, to the limits, our ability to organize internally all those things which our wills harbor inside of us.

We possess a delicate balance between the states of unconscious, and conscious awareness. In the state in-between both lies the liminal; a place where the void is expansive, and relentless in power. Our psychologic functions are informed by a great expanse of internal dialogues, states of existence, and naturally learned responses to outside stimuli. We are continuously in a state of comparing ourselves with the other animals of this world, and simultaneously setting ourselves apart from the rest of the world by way of our depth of sentience.

These experiences come off as paradoxes of being which we are doomed to become extremely intimate with in this life. This realization adds to the tragedy that is the human form, particularly in that the implications are such that we cannot begin to fathom just how enslaved we are by this distinct sense of self. A profound observation here is that we as a species are bound directly to our perception of ourselves in relation to the scientific, and objectively known.

Dr. Jung persists with the insight that "Man appears as something extraordinarily individual in contrast with animals." Humankind is blessed (and cursed) to possess sentience. This is something that can be observed through those great works of art (of which each culture possesses a grand treasure of), and destructive inventions of the possible final days of humanity (namely nuclear weapons). We create, and destroy, in such a way that our belief systems are assuaged sufficiently, and our sense of self is made to be quieted by the rigorous following of conformist ideologies.

Our contrast with the rest of the animal kingdom extends far beyond the visibly apparent. This is a reality because we are continuously finding ourselves in conflict with the conscious, and unconscious states of our minds. What we internally want is not always congruent with what society wants, and this distinction provides all we need to know about the psychopathology of mutually assured destruction in the case of war. Not to move the bar even more, I will reign in my comments to include only what I deem necessary to further my argument. In short, we are a selfish species, capable of great aesthetic accomplishments amid a hoarding of annihilation through destructive action.

What I speak of is merely an additional dimension of the greater problem related to the expression of the will. When we are fully indoctrinated by society, we find ourselves basking in the illusion of control through learned behaviors. This illusion is powerful, yet it is not without those flaws of design that would bar an individual from breaking through this barrier to liberation.

In those barriers that we create for ourselves, and those which are created for us lies a paradox that returns itself to the initial conceptualizations we are speaking about here. Our creative, and destructive nature, allows us to become numb to any conceptualization of the outside world in relation to our own individuality.

When we are focused only on the physiological, we miss the point of the contemplation of the will. The ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus, in

his work entitled the *Enchiridion*, places the focus on physiological needs as being clearly below the needs of the mind of genius. For Epictetus, "It is a mark of want of genius to spend much time in things relating to the body, as to be long in our exercises, in eating and drinking, and in the discharge of other animal functions."

Epictetus lived a very compelling, and complex life, which was informed by his early days as a slave. He knew first-hand what the difficulties of life consisted of. It is also no doubt that he knew about the limitations of the will. His writings are heavily focused on seeing the world for what it is; namely, that which is beyond our control save for those few things which we can manipulate via our desire. But even desire was not sufficient for him, because it led to the focus on the physical body over the needs of the intellect.

The whole essence of the individual, according to Epictetus, was to base each situation in the conceptualization of acceptance. The will is not free insofar as it is controlled largely by outside forces, but it is free in the sense that it is resting on a foundation of a stoic balance of the mental faculties. This creates a paradox, but one that can only be manifested by us as human beings in such a unique way. Each paradox that we create, or abide by, brings us further into the experience of what it means to be human.

Our understanding of what it means to be human hinges on these strange paradoxes of being, as far as each one of these experiences touches deeply upon the states of human consciousness. It is through human consciousness that we find ourselves at odds with everything in a delicate balance between the positive values of being (via pain, pleasure, etc..), and the negative values of the liminal (via non-experience, and states of non-thought). These values are arbitrary but hold *some* significance to us in an ideological way. As human beings, it is necessary for us to invent value for those things which are necessarily experienced, and those we call upon *ourselves* to experience.

The freedom found in the limited expression of the will requires an understanding of the unconscious origins of these principles, as well as their current manifestations. Continuing the path of elaborating on his principles, Epictetus states that "in every affair consider what precedes and follows, and then undertake it." For Epictetus, being aware of the physical, and mental properties of actions allows for informed experiences that are concurrent with the principles of mindfulness. Even those actions that limit, or constrain our desire to experience the fullness of liberation must be considered carefully upon closer inspection.

As Epictetus was a slave, he was no doubt intimate with the concept of how his own will was severely limited through circumstance. This, I believe, deeply affected his later writings, at least to the extent that there is a constant awareness of the ethical conundrum of moral freedom through action. His philosophy radiated positively with the thought that, although we are not free to do our will in most cases, we are free to examine each of our experiences from a detached view.

When we see the will from a detached view, we can see through the eyes of men of great wisdom such as Epictetus. No longer are we bidden to be slaves of experience, but we can be observers as well. In our observations we learn more about ourselves, our world, and our place in it. This is not to say that we should blindly look at the lives of others, and make judgments on how to view things without becoming informed of their plausibility. We must always be on guard against self-deception, and this is inclusive of examining the works of any man, or woman.

Nonetheless, this vision of observation is principled, and focused heavily on the conceptualizations I am discussing here. There is a realization of the lack of control that each one of us has against the strength of the currents of the great vast ocean of life when pitted against us. It is here that bravery can be discovered, and this encounter places an additional sense of meaning on what might otherwise be considered a meaningless life.

Depending on our sociological positioning, and the effects upon it through culture, and time, we must consider that even our unconscious thoughts on freedom are influenced by the objectivity found in the outside world. What I mean here is that the limit of our creative unconscious is bound within the reflection that we have of all experiences at once. Our vision of what is possible, though it may conflict with what we know ourselves to be capable of, expands itself into the unconscious mind where all possibilities exist at one time.

This is a complex concept, but let us continue to simplify it so that we can penetrate some of its truths. All those things that we know to be possible in terms of actions, or the expression of the will, are cemented within the unconscious mind as continual possibilities. Our unconscious mind processes incredibly complex arrangements of possibilities through fragments of thoughts that occasionally surface to our conscious awareness. When these thoughts become apparent to us, we are tempted to believe that our will is capable of more than it is. When we are tempted thusly, we allow ourselves to be deceived by the concept that the will is somehow not as limited as it is.

Now we have penetrated the heart of the matter which is to see that the unconscious mind is merely reflective of objective possibilities. It does not consist of the physically objective, but it exists as a manifestation of our sentience. It is almost an afterimage that burns itself into our very consciousness through a persistence that is greater than our own attention span. So many theorists have come up with the idea that the unconscious mind, and the workings of the mind, are profoundly deep. This depth of being fascinates us because it is a part, and parcel, of who we are inside. When we allow ourselves to realize this, we are in the process of a peculiar contemplation which elevates our mind to the sort of mindfulness that Epictetus speaks of.

Our internal world must be reconstructed through an appreciation of the temporal nature of the will as perceived by society at large. We need not be mentally enslaved by what society dictates in terms of the will.

There is always the possibility of being aware of what is going on, even if we cannot control the outcome of most of our forced actions. We have the potential to become self-aware in a sense. Though we are beholden to the destiny of being controlled, we can be aware of each moment, and each experience that comes our way.

Awareness allows for an expansion of the liberation we are seeking through viewing life with a stoic lens. This is not to say that the stoic conflicts with such ideas as pessimism, or absurdism. It is merely an augmentation of the idea that awareness fills in those gaps of control that we do not possess because of time, circumstance, or station in life. Each one of us possesses the inner mental faculty to realize the fundamental conception of freedom.

The power of the will is extrapolated by the fact that we possess at least some locus of control over our lives. In this locus we have the choice to view our predicament as either drowning in the disparity of existence, or as a manifestation of our consciousness interacting with a limited framework (the outside world, namely). This choice couples with the ideal that our freedom does not merely come through willed action but through ideas, and thought patterns. What I mean by this is that those holes or void-like areas of the human experience are filled in (at least partially) through the ability to stoically accept those challenges that life brings to us.

We are constantly looking for our source of freedom through the expression of the will, but it is not sufficient for us because of experience. Thus, we must look toward the stoic as a means toward an end; a focus on the neutral observer-like experience to overcome our limitations. When we do so, we are infinitely more equipped to handle those sobering realities that we all must face at one point or another. I am speaking here of loss, death, complex grief, and other emotional states that correspond to a sense of freedom (or slavery).

Returning to emotional maturity, we must concede that even our own ideas concerning freedom are biased. We base our ideas on the peculiar

conceptualizations that we form in our daily lives regarding the expressions of freedom we manifest. Our ideals, thought patterns, and principles are all based on experiences as well as learning. What we thought we knew ten years ago turns out to be only a part of the equation relating to the freedom of the will.

Our thoughts are based on idealism, objective facts, subjective dream-like states, and our interactions with other people. What we see in others we manifest in ourselves through mimicry of action. It is as if we are one organism within a multitude of organisms searching for the space to be free. The tragedy here is that there is a limitation not just of the will, but of the very freedom we thirst for in our daily lives. It seems as if we will never have a full mental grasp on the weight of all these conceptualizations, and their true significance for us.

Our physical manifestation of the desire for freedom shows itself distinctly in three states. The first state is the mental state, of which we are constantly experiencing. Secondly, we have the state of opposition, which is the battle between the desire to survive, and the death impulse. Thirdly, but not least, is the sexual instinct. This is a primitive manifestation of the frustrations that we experience when we are dealing with the conflict between personal conceptions of freedom, and the outside world.

There are of course, other states, but they are offshoots of these primary ones. Dr. Jung adds to this concept by stating that "the descriptive standpoint of psychology accepts the multiplicity of instincts, among which is the sexual instinct, as a special phenomenon; moreover, it recognizes certain affluxes of libido to non-sexual instincts." This statement is indicative of the concept that the sexual mirrors the non-sexual primitive conscious states that comprise the whole of the human mind. There is a direct link between the primitive, and the complex. Everything is manifested in the conceptualizations we are discussing here because they are continuously being influenced by the sexual instinct.

How are we supposed to get past our existential despair regarding the fallibility of our perceptions? This is a question that has no easy answer, but it is possible to dissect what we know from what we do not know. We can function on a cognitive level that is based on logic, reason, and objectivity (as well as subjectivity). These abilities allow us to apprehend those things more closely regarding the will which we have thus far faltered in our understanding. Every action, thought, idea, and ideal carries us through those primitive expressions of the quest for liberation by way of synthesizing the logical with the irrational.

When we consider our inner world, and how it is affected by the unconscious reception of those finely tuned workings of outer reality, we come to the realization that our abilities (though limited) are based on a level of sentience required to maximize liberty. This means that we can fulfill our self-appointed duty of maximizing our liberation through what is possible to achieve on a willed level. We are set aback by the powerful forces of the world which seek to enslave us through our lack of choice, but we can rebound through a stoic view of those things we cannot control.

This existence is informed, as previously stated, through the conflict between the survival instinct, and the death impulse. Both states act to fulfill the will in the sense that there is a focus here on action rather than mere thought. To survive implies an acting upon those forces of nature which allows us to thrive to the best of our ability. For us to look at the death impulse, this is a similar state to the survival mode which requires a strength of will which must be accessed by the individual alone.

In this journey toward self-awareness through liberation of the individual, we are bidden to continuously search for alternatives to our enslaved state. When we cannot control the outcome of a situation, we must sit back objectively, and look upon the experience as neither good, nor bad. Doing this will allow us to be more objective regarding our own estimation of ourselves, and our purpose in this world will be much clearer.

Our perception of the will, though it may conflict with the outside world, is as valid as collectivist visions of this freedom. Returning to the ideas of Epictetus, we see ourselves more clearly through those forces of self-awareness which are detached from emotion. To view things objectively, we must be willing to separate ourselves from those forces of nature which call upon us to act irrationally in an emotional state. This is no easy task, but it will at least allow some degree of healing for those stark experiences in life that are beyond our control.

Healing requires that we transform the uncontrollable into stoic experiences that serve to guide us toward a possible future. There is a powerful intuition that is unlocked within the individual, allowing for a deeper expression of that liberation which we all seek. Collectivism, entrenched as it is in the conceptualizations of common experience, does not see the subconscious the way the individual can. It is concerned with the overall knowledge of life, and its commonality of experience through shared limitations.

Though our perception is flawed, we can uniquely traverse this world through a combination of reliance on reason, as well as awareness of our unconscious thought-patterns. The latter is informed by those evolved patterns which comprise each one of us on a micro-individual level. Though the unconscious is reflective of the objective world, it is not complete, for it is dependent on the rational as well as impossible.

Epictetus, in his conceptualizations, calls for a detachment which is not enacted for any reason other than the attempt at true inner liberation. This concept is fruitful in that we 'fill in' those areas of conflict with the outside world through a mentation of sorts. Our only true power lies within the mind, and this is evident through the fact that nothing can fully control (in its raw state) the unconscious experience of the individual. Influences can occur, but these are by-products of the experience we all have in the outside, objective world. Though the unconscious is reflective of the objective, it can be manipulated in ways that the objective cannot.

The constructions, and machinations, of society at large are as malleable as our own unconscious propositions. The reason why these things appear to be static to us is that change is incredibly slow in the case of society. In the case of our subconscious minds, there are rapid fluctuations of changes that occur simultaneously; enough to make us confused as to their true nature. This creates a contrast that exists between the outward facing social world, and the inner spaces of the mind. Art allows for a buffer between the two worlds, but only exists as a futile temporary plug for a vacuous tear in our conception of the world. Our acceptance of things which we cannot change is also a temporary plug, but a vital one for us to pursue considering our desire for personal freedom.

It could be said that everything we attempt to do is to stave off the inevitable creeping in of the void-like states of the fabric of reality which indiscriminately invalidates our entire existence. Our search for freedom, being relevant only to ourselves in our minds, then becomes almost a non-entity to the world at large.

If we decide to look upon the world from an impartial perspective (which is nearly impossible as we are so influenced by our own minds) we would see just how little our lives mean. This is not to say that subjectively we do not have a purpose. This merely means that from a cosmic level we cannot share that fullness of the ideal of freedom which exists only on an individual level. Nonetheless, we are unable to consistently look at the world with impartial eyes because we are drowning in the abyss of our own individual predilections toward meaning.

Ideals are sourced from the conceptualizations of possibilities, inclusive of those things which are mere fantasies in our own minds. We may not be able to be like Epictetus in his stolid philosophy, but we can at least imagine ourselves attempting to reach such lofty states. The very act of attempting to improve our lot by way of philosophy dignifies our existence in a way that dogmatic idealism cannot reach. This is a concept which is full of contradictions that must be rectified prior to bearing fruit.

The great tragedy of life is that we are subject to our own fallibility. Our perception of life is based on so many external, and internal factors that we cannot pinpoint the exact nature of our being. We are thrown into the cosmic vacuum through the continual changes that are being made in our lives, and the lives of others. Our own perception of the will is based on the interactions we have between the social world outside of us, and the internal world we create for ourselves. Sentience keeps us slaves to our own desires, particularly those which are related to the expression of the will.

This slavery is brought upon us through no fault of our own. It was not through our own machinations that suffering exists. It simply does. We are experiments of our own devising, continuously forced to repeat history as it was experienced by countless of our ancestors throughout time. This is the very definition of madness; in that we are enslaved through our repetition of action which must be experienced over, and over. It is a good thing that our minds cannot fully comprehend those glaring vacuous states that lie just outside of the periphery of our vision. Should we have full access to those states, it is possible that we would go quite mad.

It is through the states of being made nearly insane that the human race continuously forges onward into new abysses of the unknown. Our conceptualizations of liberty, personal justice, and self-awareness are thrown into the cosmos through the idealism that we project into the outside world. The world is not meant for our sentience to prevail. This is the source of our enslavement, in that we are pitting ourselves against the grain of reality through our own very human needs, and desires.

We cannot hope to win the cosmic war against the limitations of free will, but we can augment our understanding of this reality. What I mean by this is that it is possible, through stoic idealism, and rational thought, to lessen our suffering through a change in perspective. By changing our perspective, we allow ourselves to confront those horrifying aspects of nature while simultaneously creating a new foundation for us to rest our minds upon.

On a psychological level, the more we explore our understanding of the unconscious the more we will be able to reason with ourselves in our quest for freedom. After all, the only thing we have for sure (outside of the objective world) is our own perspective on life, and how to live it. This is a subjective take on the question of the quality of life, and is designed to elucidate on those things which we automatically experience through our daily lives.

The mind holds all that is necessary for us to expand our liberties in the face of oppositional change. The causal world is filled with harsh realities that affect us deeply, inclusive of those physical pains we experience alongside our mental ones. Whether we experience suffering in the sense of mental incongruities through the physical callous existence we partake in, or if it is merely physical is of no importance to these concepts. All forms of suffering are sufficient for the individual to seek out ways to either defeat, or view differently those things which seek to damage us in some fundamental way.

We are continuously distracted by those things which exist outside of ourselves, as well as those intrusive thoughts that get in the way of our advancement on an idealistic level. These distractions are additional ways that we are forced to suffer through simply because they are part, and parcel of our natures. This brings us back to the great tragedy of fallibility. We are forced to etch out a life for ourselves amid tremendous suffering. This keeps us from more fully understanding those things which distract us, but do not completely hold our attention.

The great void of those things which we cannot control seeks to overcome our objections through the natural pulsations of chaos that envelopes our very being. Whether it be through the aspects of the uncontrollable forces of life, or through the need to view life from a detached point of view, we are all forced to become very intimate with the turmoil of the world. If there is one great truth in all this self-discovery, it is that suffering is a continuous process through which we are intrinsically bound by.

Ultimately, we are bound to the desperation of our pursuit of the truth where there is *quite possibly* none. This is a point that needs to be driven home, particularly in the quest for liberation. Why is this the case? The answer to that is multifold, and exists in several places at once. It is necessary for us to dissect these manifold ideas as logically as possible for us to get to the heart of the matter. When we utilize logic, reason, and our inner capabilities for a guide toward this end, we can move forward more efficiently in this quest.

Returning to the conceptualization of the void, we are continuously amid a great divide between our use of logic, and the irrational. The irrational is represented by our subconscious mind, where the phantasms of dreams invade our entirety of being in such a way as to fool us into believing some of them. The logical resides in our conscious ability to divide those things which are reasonable, tested, and known, against those things which cannot be known other than through subjectivity.

The human race is continuously thrown into the morass of eternal struggles here, because there are times where the line between the subjective, and objective are blurred. The objectively known is easy enough to decipher in our conceptualizations of reality, but there is a dream-like state existing closer to the subconscious that manifests itself occasionally through our daily interactions with the outside world. This dream-like state is a consequence of our continual interactions with the world, and other individuals.

When we focus on the primitive through our instinctual reliance on emotional states above the rational, we are tempting ourselves to not clearly view those things which we must penetrate for us to achieve a reasonable knowledge of our predicament. The primitive allows us to gather those inner strengths that we possess toward the dreaming subjectivism that exists in each one of us. This must not be taken for granted, particularly when it comes to the attempt to decipher the truth behind each of our experiences. Still, in the weakness of character that we possess, we are bidden to move forward in our quest for truth.

Chapter Five

Parasitic Relationships Between Individuals, and Society.

"Even if a people were not compelled through internal discord to submit to the restraint of public laws, war would bring this about, working from without. For, according to the contrivance of nature which we have mentioned, every people finds another tribe in its neighbourhood, pressing upon it in such a manner that it is compelled to form itself internally into a state to be able to defend itself as a power should." – *Perpetual Peace*, by Immanuel Kant.

Immanuel Kant here describes how public laws are followed through the submission of people to war, and its greater effects. Outside forces crush our wills into submission, as we are pitted against one another through the machinations of some perverse collective consciousness. This is the basis of the parasitic relationship that exists between the individual, and society at large. We are forced to enter the conformist states that limit our ability to make conscious decisions on our own behalf.

Nevertheless, we are constantly waging an internal war amid our very visible submission to conflict in the outside world. This conflict is dual in the sense that it is dependent on internalized conflicting states, as well as the external ones. The various aspects of the subconscious, as well as the conscious mind, force us to become involved in a never-ending battle between the individual, and society at large.

As we are amid a tremendous conflict within ourselves, we wage a battle with other individuals through the expression of desire. Desire is the very foundation of the will in that, either through the subconscious, or conscious mind, there is a pattern that is followed which causes us to react in a very specific way to the outside world.

The great Italian philosopher Giacomo Leopardi, in his work entitled *The Moral Essays*, describes the individual as being enslaved to fate. This slavery is informed by the idealism found in the conception of virtue.

According to Leopardi, virtue is a phase which is like a mirage. This mirage is a part of the illusory nature of human consciousness, which creates a bias for us to imagine that we are better off than we truly are. Fate, as a subject, is related to the will in that it assumes that no matter what we do we are enslaved to circumstances beyond our control. This is an ancient concept that translates somewhat loosely to indicate that there are forces outside of our own desires that we must conform to.

Fate is not a concept that is tied only to the inescapable. It is a concept that assumes that there are circumstances beyond our control that we cannot avoid. This can be due to situations where our own expression of will becomes the cause of a trickle-down effect that quickly spirals out of our control. If this seems like a nightmare, it is. The concept of fate thus becomes our undoing in that we are tied inextricably to the consequences of our actions. Because of this, we must admit to ourselves that the will is not only limited, but it is beholden to those situations where we cannot decide anything for ourselves.

Leopardi focused on those aspects of the individual in which we are completely under the influence of outside circumstances. These circumstances are powerful in that they dictate most of our movements throughout life, inclusive of those actions which we often feel exist under our control. We deceive ourselves, of course, because many of our actions are outside our locus of control, and the sooner we see this the better for our psyche. For Leopardi, we are under the mirage of our own idealism when what we experience is abjectly the opposite of our desires. We have a bias for optimism that pervades our very being. Perhaps this bias is based on survival qualities that have evolved alongside other primitive reactions to common experiences in suffering. Alongside our suffering, we are impulsively utilizing our unconscious thoughts, dreams, and prejudices to prevent us from maximizing the constrained liberty we possess.

Kant makes it clear that the natural state of man is not one of calm tranquility but one of conflict, and war. For Kant, "A state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state (status naturalis), which is

rather to be described as a state of war: that is to say, although there is not perhaps always actual open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an outbreak may occur."

We are continuously battling those forces of conflict that exist on a micro, as well as a macro level. In the micro level, we are conflicted with the unconscious, as well as the conscious mind. At the macro level, we are battling conscious desires to survive versus self-annihilation. On a yet grander scale, we see both levels interacting with one another to influence the outside objective world.

Our perception of the world, through the objective, is one of desire versus necessity. There is a constant conflict between what we want the most, and the limitations imposed upon us through life circumstances. This translates into the impulse toward war. This impulse is inclusive of the inner desire for self-annihilation through annihilation of the other. When both aspects interact with each other there is a perfect recipe for the ultimate destruction of mankind by a return to the primitive state of barbarism.

But savagery does not find itself alone in this universe of pure unadulterated chaos; there is a confusion between true inner desires, and the denial of the will toward others to consider. Because we are unable to see the world as it truly is, there is an admixture between the will of the individual, and the sublimation of outer-world conflict toward the self. This creates an explosive situation where the individual is volatile, and likely to work toward some destructive end. Of course, the mind has safeguards against outright destruction through such traits as empathy, altruism, and a view that is biased toward the optimistic view of self-evaluation. The more we return toward nature, the more primitive our evaluations become. Soon following this, we become unable to view our situation objectively. This is another example of the great tragedy of human consciousness.

Society frowns upon the concept of the will being dissected, for doing so calls the very foundations it rests upon into question. These

foundations are not as sound as they might appear to be on the surface. We all agree with these conditions, because the collective will forces us to fall into obeisance to those aspects of life which are beyond our control. This is an additional tragedy which marks the human condition, particularly as it relates to the sentience which we possess. This tragedy is not preventable, because it is a condition that is prompted by the social atmosphere present in our daily lives.

We are engaged in the eternal conflict between the succession of tragedies that befall us, and the expression of the will. It is here where the individual must recognize, on a conscious level, that there is a space of being that is wholly enslaved to the machinations of the outside world. Our expression of the will, therefore, must be a powerful manifestation of our innate desire to become liberated from the shackles of existence. This aspect of the human condition is extremely close to the death impulse, of which I write extensively in my prior works.

The death impulse, focused as it is on self-annihilation, also works in tandem with the primitive impulse for survival. This has been established. The will is emboldened by the expression of desire in the individual, and is an obligate parasite upon the external world. The outside world is manifested through objective truths, physical laws, and mathematical exactness. For freedom to exist alongside such stolid facts we must be willing to accept that there are conditions that must be met, otherwise our will shall be denied.

When we are conscious of our limitations, we are better able to judge our condition. We exist in a world of conflict, change, conditional situations, and a fight between the right to live, and die. Our will has a place here in this very complex world, but it is relegated to a set of limitations that we must all abide by. The will, in this light, is also a form of survivalism because it allows the individual to produce hope. We may have an optimism bias, but it is based on some beneficial process.

We are both products, as well as independent agents of the greater social sphere. What I mean by this is that everything that happens in the causal, outside world, finds a way to affect us in a profound way. The objective is the cause of our grief, as well as the pathway by which we are forced to enter upon with our very lives. Everything that is related to the subjective remains in the unconscious, as well as the day-dreaming mind. The self is informed by the desire of the individual in such a manner as to completely affect the person in question.

Society encroaches upon our freedom in a magnitude that cannot fully be appreciated by any one of us. We are stuck in our optimism bias, and continue to be lulled into the sleep of our own reason. No one, no matter how well-educated or mentally prepared, can penetrate the truth behind the veil of life as it stands. If anyone were to be able to penetrate this truth, they would most likely fall into a great depression, the likes of which has rarely been seen before. A despair would befall the strongest among us, were we to penetrate those depths of ideals that relate to the experience of this life.

Of course, some of this is speculation based on what I know to be true through experience. In my estimation, it is only through individual experience, as well as objective scientific truths, that the path toward self-discovery can become fully known. I have come to this conclusion because of those very intimate experiences that I have experienced in my own personal life that has informed me of who I am today. I suspect that others have similar experiences regarding those revelations which I have experienced, and that my hypothesis is not too far off the mark.

Universality of thought can be applied to the objective experiences we all go through. How we subjectively take those experiences is highly individualized for each one of us. This is an example of the dichotomy of sentience that continuously separates one side of life from another. We all experience similar things, but we internalize each of those experiences on a unique personal level.

Never have we found ourselves at this point in post-modern society where changes to moral questions are being challenged to such a degree. Moral questions here relate to the will because our desire greatly affects the outside world. This is regardless of whether we are pulled along like marionettes to the machinations of physics, and causality, or no. Some of our experiences, when they are acted upon in the outside world, provide for us a way to augment the nature of our objective reality.

This augmentation comes through actions specifically chosen by an individual which holds physical ramifications for the outside world. An example of this is an individual that holds resources that are needed by other individuals. The individual in question can choose to provide, in an egalitarian way, aid to those who lack those specific resources. They can also choose not to provide any assistance with said resources. It is entirely a matter of desire, and choice. Things are still being affected in a visible way.

These reflections imply that there is some sort of power behind the expression of the will. I do not deny this. I am advocating for the theory that the will is limited. The will is nonetheless a powerful aspect of our sentience, and must hold us captivated by its awesome strength of presence in our lives. Nonetheless, it is necessary to also look upon the will as being a force that is highly regulated by the outside world. By seeing things this way, we allow ourselves to be more impartial in our judgments on our own experiences.

The environment that we find ourselves in is fast paced, highly intuitive, and nearly instantaneous when it comes to receiving information via technology. We live in a world where we find ourselves always isolated in our experience of the causal due to an overwhelming access to information. Our distant ancestors did not have to contend with this environment, and this greatly affected no doubt their own outlook on the expression of the will. Within all the conflicts I have outlined thus far, there is the additional conflict of technology to contend with. It is no wonder why we are so discordant in our individual views of what the will really represents.

Seneca, in his work entitled Peace of Mind, describes our interactions with others in a realistic way. He proclaimed that we should be cautious when dealing with others, because things are not always as they would seem to us. Seneca implored the reader that "in all cases one should be careful in one's choice of men, and see whether they be worthy of our bestowing a part of our life upon them, or whether we shall waste our own time and theirs also: for some even consider us to be in their debt because of our services to them." The interactions we have with others are a mirror of our own duplicity towards ourselves when dealing with the will, or personal desire.

This theme brings with it the admission of additional forms of conflict within the individual. There are many layers of tension that present themselves to us as sentient beings, and this is an additional one. Seneca, as a philosopher, saw tension as being plain to see, yet not commonly observed by others without a presentation of logic, and reason directed at them. People need to think in order to reason. Logic must be examined as the highest of possibilities when it comes to answering for the behavior of the individual.

We can perform tasks without recourse to logic by using muscle memory. What I am saying does not negate this, it merely expands upon it. Our conscious decisions become the highest form of self-liberation through the practice of the will. The objective world is continually influenced by those actions which are made possible by the individual, and their strength of desire to do something effectual. When we make conscious decisions, we are creating a ripple effect in the causal world around us. This is a form of liberation itself.

The very experience of performing an arbitrary action is in a sense a form of self-liberation through a limited framework. Freedom does not mean unlimited access to all possible action in this train of thought. What it does mean is that there is a way to access a taste of freedom, as it were, for the individual when they view their own actions in this sense. Everyone holds in their unconscious mind a key to understanding self-liberation.

Our choices are, as previously stated, subject to our station in life. This does not preclude the fact that we have a few options when confronted with how we interact with the world. This has been discussed at length so far, but I will continue to elucidate on its meaning in the following pages. When we make decisions, we are actively participating in our own self-liberation through a sort of empowerment. This highly personalized form of empowerment is based on the desire of the conscious mind to become something other than stagnant. It is in this stagnancy that we find ourselves yearning for more than our life hands to us.

When we act decisively on something, and make things happen through the power of our will, we are imposing on the world a form of self-creation that cannot be negated. Actions that might take place but never materialize still hold some form of power for the individual, as they represent thoughts that become active desires. As the individual is sovereign over their own inner world, the outside realm temporarily conforms to this form of self-creation. We can, to a degree, influence the outside world by working within its impositions.

Given the resources, we can rise to the occasion, and make something of ourselves. This is of course partially objectively true of individuals that, when given the opportunity, go to school, land that career, and maintain themselves to a comfortable degree. This is not always possible, given that variations exist in both resources, as well as in abilities. Both these factors influence the outcome of whether an individual will 'succeed', or no. In addition to these influences are the others we surround ourselves with, and their own occupations.

Each of these things are highly interconnected, and influence many possibilities to become reality in one way or another. Without the influence of others, it may not be possible to land that award winning job. In addition, the person seeking to improve their financial position may not be able to if they are born into impoverished situations. There are, of course, always exceptions to these outcomes, but in general they are stagnant in their influential results.

The basis for our construction of the freedoms we possess lies in the parasitic relationship between us and society. We are continuously forced to conform either superficially through our action (or inaction), as well as our complicity with the factors that exist in the outside world. We rely on the machinations of society to continue etching out our miserable existence in such a way that we eventually assume that it is a positive thing to happen to us. This is like a form of Stockholm syndrome, where the individual begins to feel positive regard toward the forces of enslavement that is encroaching upon all of us.

We should not remain confident in our belief that society has the best intentions for us when it comes to self-actualization. There may be avenues where certain actions are declared allowable, or legal, and others illegal. Some of these avenues, or aspects of society, are arbitrarily chosen, while others are based on preventing others from being abused by other individuals. No system, or social group is perfect. I argue that all societal groups are inherently flawed, albeit to a degree of necessity, and that true freedom can never come from social mores, or cultural artefacts.

The will is controlled by society on several levels. Each of these levels are inclusive of physical, emotional, and mental encroachment which is profoundly felt. We do not consciously absorb the effects of this encroachment, but we display the effects of its enslavement upon our very lives. This is the displacement of the will which removes personal liberty from the individual, and replaces it with a sanitized version that is acceptable to society at large. Our will is feral, dark, and filled with an anxious presence of being which is felt at the level of the unconscious mind.

In this realization, we see that there are tremendous sources of power that loom over us in our daily lives. This creates, from a detached point of view, a massive source of oppression which strangles the very life from each one of us. We are left in a psychological desert, unable to fend for ourselves without the gleeful assistance of our oppressors. This is the essence of the great tragedy that has befallen mankind.

We can never be fully free, for we are tied down by circumstances beyond our control. This is the basis for all discrepancies found in the exercise of the individual will. It is in this lack of freedom that we are bound to situational essence, causing each one of us to turn a blind eye to the magnitude of our enslavement.

As we journey through our lives, we are impelled by nature to question the basis for our fundamental ideologies. It is through our sentience that we are forced to gaze into a symbolic mirror of sorts, and question those fundamental things which we exhibit daily. To add to our dolorous situation, we are aware of those things which we cannot possess, or work toward. We know that there are discrepancies between what we can control, and what we cannot even begin to fathom. This is the sorrowful aspect of humankind; in that we cannot be truly free.

The focus of our ability to reason tied intrinsically with those aspects of the will which are simultaneously inside, and outside our locus of control. We can manifest some of our desires (based on our situation, and positioning in life), while other things are beyond our use at any level. The natural resources that we possess as individuals are sorely lacking when it comes to personal agency, for we are bidden to do the will of those invisible forces that are representative of socially acceptable actions. Technically, we could do certain things which are within our desires to achieve, although it would come at the expense of our freedom because of societal, and moral consequences.

Nature provides a way for us, via the sentience we possess, to desire those things which are impossible for us to attain. This is an additional source for that wellspring of tragedy which exists at the very core of humankind. We manifest several tragedies all at once without realizing it. The greatest of these tragedies is in our lack of full possession over our own selves. Everything that we manifest allows us to come closer to some impossible ideal of freedom which cannot be fully attained. We toil toward some unknown destination in search of what might comprise our true selves. In the end, we are left with nothing and are destitute.

Whether we succeed in our enterprise of freedom is yet to be discovered. I imagine that we are limited in even the brightest of our ideals, however malleable they might be. Thoughts, ideas, and daydreams provide a temporary escape for humanity in that these things soften the blow of the oppressive nature of reality, even if only in the slightest amount. It is here that we realize that the nature of humankind is ephemeral, and malleable to a degree.

There is a conflict between the will, and the outside world which is verifiable through experience. The conflicts that exist within us are tied within the instinct to survive, and the death impulse. Countless mythologies, stories, and ideas have been expressed throughout the course of human history which calls out to each, and every one of us through our very essence. We are bound by the atavistic which dwells in each of us to a profound degree. All our possible actions, as well as actual ones, are tied intrinsically to this concept as well. We are creating, through our daily lives, new mythologies based on the old ones, and reliving those very moments which our ancestors have passed down to us intrinsically.

Just as the ancient sages of the stoic minded variety would implore us to change our view on the inescapable through a mental exercise of detachment, we must look upon those things which we cannot control in a productive way. What I mean by this is that since we cannot control certain aspects of our own lives, we must be willing to transform our view regarding the outcome of things outside of the individual's will.

Society may be able to control some of our actions, ideas, and idealism through coercion, force, or sublimation, but it does not have power over how we choose to handle these things. It is with stoicism that we can bridge those widening gaps between the will, and the enslavement of the individual through focusing on our reactions. This allows us to express ourselves in a way that, while limited, is representative of true self-liberation through action. Stoicism may not provide a way for us to be free in the sense that our idealism may desire, but it does help pave the way for some measure of sanity in this world of chaos we exist in.

Chapter Six

Sociological Concerns Regarding the Will.

"I hate every tomb—I abominate wills, And rather than tears from the world to implore, I would ask of the crows with their vampire bills To devour every bit of my carcass impure." – *The Flowers of Evil*, Charles Baudelaire, from: *The Joyous Defunct*.

Charles Baudelaire here is discovering the experience of death in such a way that it is based on the conception of corruption. Here, the very fiber of being known as the self is destroyed by death, and the reflections we observe are of a physical nature strictly. Baudelaire's work is often reflective of this situation that all human beings must contend with; that of the ultimate annihilation of death. Society shuns looking upon death as a topic worthy of much consideration, for doing so negates the will in such a way as to provide no happy ending in sight. It is in the abyss of death that we find the desires of an individual forever snuffed out.

Society looks upon death as being unfortunate but does not consider the profound impact it has upon the living. We are tied intrinsically with the desire for survival, as well as the conflict inherent within the death drive. When we stop to consider the impact that death has upon us, we are more prepared to exercise our will via desire in those situations where it is possible. What I mean by this is that reflecting upon the ancestral truth of the temporal nature of life allows for a greater appreciation of those actions which lead toward the liberation of the self.

The self is continuously changing through the perceptions that we gain through life experiences. Whether we see the depth of these perceptions (or no), our outlook is wholly dependent on the choice that we make toward an honest observation of life itself. This is something that is evident throughout the history of mankind, and individual lives.

Sociological constructs force us to become complacent within our circle of perceived realities. We are amid a great deception within our lives

that has been perpetuated since time immemorial. Our ideas, thoughts, ideals, and perceptions are greatly influenced by the conformity that is prevalent in society. We are a part of the problem just as much as we are a part of the solution. In this corruption of the self, we are forced to bargain our liberties for the sake of consistency within the grand scheme of things.

When we observe social norms from a more profound point of view, we can see that there are patterns that exist within each stratum of society. These patterns force us to look at life from a structural point of view that sees the individual as being one cog in the great machine that is life. As we are seen as pieces of a larger device, our importance diminishes incredibly. When our importance diminishes, we are forced to sacrifice our individuality for the greater 'good'.

Our reliance on the oblivious nature of communal living forces us to lose sight of the primitive nature of our unconscious minds. We crave the experiences of freedom that are conceived within us at every single moment of life. The discrepancy between what we desire, and how we are forced to act (or not act) creates a conflict that is as complex as we are. In the unconscious mind, we are continuously dreaming of new ways for our will to be expressed. Though we are enslaved to the machinations of society, our consciousness is thoroughly influenced by our hidden ideals, and thoughts.

By looking at life as a series of social norms, we lose all those aspects of self-awareness that we desire to cultivate. Life becomes a task to be completed, rather than an adventure in self-liberation. We are products of our environments, rather than being shaped by our experiences alone. This realization is filled with the aura of despair, and it is rightfully the case here. But how can we escape from the clutches of a society that is in such a want of meaning? The answer is we cannot. The only thing we can do is bridge the gaps between what we can control, and what we cannot control. By doing this, we are maximizing our self-liberation by choice.

Reality, as a construct, does not allow for aberrations of the perceived truth without consequences. Whether we experience these consequences as internalized existential dread, or vocalize them through our actions which have consequences, the revelation of fragility that exists around us becomes apparent to the individual who questions everything. This does not mean that this realization offers anything but personal insight, for there is nothing we can do to change the heavy trajectory of society on our own.

If others are to realize the scope of the enslavement that we suffer from, they will no doubt do it as individuals. The mode of expression, idealism, dream-states, and unconscious sublimations are all based on how the individual reacts. This is the opposite of societal expression, which is a collective of ideals, thoughts, and vocalizations that create a new language of being for the 'greater good'.

The language that is devised, and developed by society is one of conformity. This conformity leverages personalized skillsets using individual talents for a common cause. This cause is based on functionality, and form, as well as the minimization of personalized conceptions of reality. The unconscious mind is not seen as holding much importance, for it is born of the individual. We can collectively experience definitions of all things, inclusive of the unconscious, but it is experienced differently when we are entrenched within the spell of ideas such as community, heritage, and ancestry.

This is not to say that there is no value whatsoever in societal bonds. There is a value here. It is just that there is too much emphasis on social structures above the value of the individual. This constrains the individual in many ways, altering the experience of the will through augmented desires entrained by societal standards. This is a difficult concept to digest, but it is one that rings true. This is especially the case when considering the many ways that various societies stifle the will even in those actions that would not affect other individuals. For the maximization of personal liberties, it is of the utmost importance to question certain roles in society as they are given to us.

There are guardians of the old order, of which religion, politics, and customs display those matters which go against our better nature. Each of these manifestations finds a way to manipulate our perception of reality for better, or worse. Collectivism shines best through these group experiences, as each of these aspects of society are based on varying levels of conformity to some degree.

I say that these things go against our better nature because they often manifest with a form of dogmatism that is best left in the dark ages. Xenophobia, hatred of the other, and the demonization of minority groups of people based on one ideal, or another, is what largely shapes each one of these cultural practices. Each of these things have their place in the combination of religion, politics, and customs which we are forced to daily endure in one way or another.

But it is not just religion, or politics, or some strange set of customs that can define exactly what the individual is up against in a tangible way. There needs to be a road for us to see each one of these things as part of a greater whole. For us to envision the greater whole, we must realize that our individuality is completely at stake here. We are actively compromising our personal liberties every day that we wake up, and choose not to think critically about these things which encroach upon us. One of the widest gaps between freedom of choice, and how we must act, is how we think about those things which enslave us. If we choose not to think critically about these things, then we doom ourselves to mental slavery, as well as physical captivity to the outside world.

Everything in this life is an active decision made (either by the individual, or someone else), even in those things which we become soon forced to contend with through old age. The conceptualizations of sanitized conformity that we are confronted with here are wholly against the individual, and the expression of desire through the will. Society wants us to sublimate our will to that of the greater expectation for conformity to the whole. This is apparent through the indoctrination we receive regarding these concepts every single day.

We cannot perceive the fullness of the truth of the world because we do not know more than what is scientifically observable. Everything emotional is abstract in this world, and can only be seen objectively because of chemical reactions within the brain. We have the scientific equipment to measure responses within the individual through neurological, and psychological means.

It is still difficult to fathom those abstractions that exist in the individual unconscious mind, however. These abstractions are intrinsically tied in with the expression of the will through manifestations of desires that well up to the surface of the mind. We can understand the concept of the will from the scientific explanation of utilizing inner tools for maximizing the possibility of survival, but we need to dissect this aspect in a deeper way. With the combination of neuroscience, psychology, and the physical sciences, we can tap into those aspects of ourselves that are still largely hidden among most of us.

The psychological aspects of the individual are found, as previously mentioned, through the unconscious mind. It is here that we can observe, albeit in a way that is subjective, those machinations of individuality that call out to the outside world through various aspects of desire, and the strength of will. The will is empowered to express itself through the breaking of boundaries found within the unconscious mind.

Ideals are no longer abstractions, but deep-seated conceptualizations ripe for expression in the outside world. This is where the liminal, or space of no-space becomes apparent through the birth of ideas that originate in those states of primitive dreaming. In the primitive we are on an even playing ground, so to speak, because our ideas are tied inextricably to the conception of the survival aspect of the individual. Each one of us has an incredible inner world that is rich, and full of possibilities. Recognizing this does not place a hamper on the realization that we are enslaved to the outside world. What it does, however, is that it allows us to see things in a way that is beneficial to our own expression of liberty. Ultimately, all expressions of the self will arise from this realization.

The subjective world within us is powerful in that it forces us to never look away from those subjects that haunt us. Dr. Sigmund Freud, in his essay *Reflections on War and Death*, focuses on the ways that human beings cope with loss. In it, he states that "We bury our hopes, our wishes, and our desires with the dead, we are inconsolable and refuse to replace our loss." Here Dr. Freud is not merely talking about the physical loss of a loved one, but the loss of something even more fundamental to human experience; that of the direction of the will toward interaction with others. It is through the experience of death that we become temporary hermits lost in the loneliness that we feel.

Our connection with other survivors changes in that it is seen in the context of the loss of a loved one. No longer can we rely on the conscious willingness toward feigned ignorance of the ultimate human fate; that of death. Death is significant here in that it is a starting point whereby the individual is forced to confront the uncomfortable aspects of situations that are beyond our control. Death contends here with the will in such a way as to mimic the expression in a natural manner.

It is in the face of total annihilation that we are forced to contend with the reality that our desires do not always match with the instinct toward survival. Even though we may not be actively seeking ways to confront death, it becomes apparent that we are engaged in a struggle that is very similar to that of the limitations placed on the will. Dr. Freud wisely states that, in a symbolic way, humans bury their desires with the dead. Desires are at the forefront of the expression of the will, for it is through this aspect of human experience that we find ourselves battling against the ravages of time.

Even in the face of death, we become paralyzed with the realization of the unknown universe. Our ability to reason becomes muted in such a way as to stifle us from seeing the entirety of the situation at hand. We make appeals to our emotional states in a desperate attempt to control an uncontrollable situation. All this struggle occurs during the loss of a loved one, but is not relegated only to this aspect of human experience.

No one can truly say whether we are free, and this includes those dogmatic institutionalists who would claim otherwise. We are stuck in the mathematical exactness of nature in that there are many things we cannot even fathom controlling. Through it all, there are various aspects of reality (objective reality) that encroach upon our abilities to reason in that some things seem to have no rhyme or reason. What I mean by this is that our existence seems permeated with chaos at every corner of the objective world surrounding us.

We can decide to augment our ability to exercise the will in such a manner as to control our thoughts when situations arise that are contrary to our desires. Doing so allows the individual to flourish by attaching the most energy to those few things we can do in the context of personal liberation. I have spoken at length regarding the death drive, and how it informs, as well as shadows, the survival instinct inherent in all of us. It is through the death drive that we augment our desires to include those aspects of emotional urgency which penetrate our very being.

Self-annihilation brings with it the end of the phenomena surrounding the desire, and personal choice. It is the meditation on this reality that allows a greater urgency, and understanding, of those personalized actions that one might perform in life. The will is constrained by several contradictory forces, specifically the death drive, and the survival instinct. Both aspects of human experience are crucial to the formation of the solidification of desires toward the translation of true liberty into action.

The causal world is further augmented by each one of our actions, no matter how small or insignificant these may seem to be. In the acausal, or unconscious mind, all action becomes possible but is filtered through the rationality of the conscious nature of decision making. This interaction is consistent with the struggle found between the will to die, and the will to live. Both desires are necessary to understand just how far the will is taken toward the extremity of action. In the final judgment of it all, the individual receives a sensation that is wholly related to personal freedom.

In the loneliness of being, we are forced to construct the truth for ourselves. It is inevitable that we conform to the demands of society, at least to the degree that nearly ensures continued survival for the individual. Nonetheless, we must find a way where we can rely on more than one foundation to represent those few elements of freedom we possess. We have the specious foundations of society, and the strange customs that follow with it. Indeed, it is through the social sphere that we become educated, and can come to the faculties of reason to such a profound degree.

Still, what is not apparent is just how far we are expected to take our understanding of our plight as we continue to live in this world, fettered as we are. We are contradictions in and of ourselves, with our eagerness to conform to some societal ideal, as well as our inner dialogue that thirsts for some ambiguous ultimate freedom of being. This is the source for any, and all internal battles that we face on a mental level. Freedom of being includes the conceptualizations that are present within each of us on a fundamental primitive level.

Our mental health is arguably linked to our ability to maximize those liberties which the so-called self demands of us. Ask anyone the source of their grief, and it will often come down to actions that were not taken (or were not made possible by circumstance), or some form of foreknowledge that would have been impossible to know. The despair of existence becomes apparent here, in that our lack of control extends to the future, as well as the past.

In our present state, we have the choice of viewing our plight from a philosophical aspect of being. This focus allows us to see those gaps in the possibilities of controlled scenarios where we are not given full access to our inner desires. Whether it be through circumstance, situational aspects, or a combination of both, the individual is better poised to maximize their own potential liberty through a conscious awareness of their mental states. The self becomes visible in a way that allows the individual to flourish effectively.

As we find ourselves in the wilderness of the soul of man, new pathways become apparent to us in time. I speak of these things figuratively, for all things which have not come to pass are merely figments of the imagination. Ideas that have not been solidified by the strength of action are merely daydreams. This is not a counterproductive thing, however, because it is based on the ideal that when we contemplate on our possible actions, we are living a life that is making the most of what liberties we do have.

One of the most powerful pathways we could choose to follow is my own recommendation of viewing the uncontrollable stoically, and exerting the will enforced through desire whenever possible. This combination of action, and inaction, provides a way for us to be at least somewhat free in our state of cosmic slavery. When we choose to combine the two aspects of the acceptance of the physical realities that we are a part of, we can begin to live more authentically. This authenticity is found in the constant struggle between our own desires, and the ravages of time, circumstance, and other factors which are variable.

In the chaos of existence, we are continuously challenged to maintain our vitality, or life, in such a way that our survival chances are maximized. This survival is not merely physical, but highly influenced by the subconscious mind. In our curse (or blessing) of sentience, we require those factors which not only maximize our chances of living in a physical way, but a mental way as well.

The mental states that contribute to survival are complex, and consist of primitive archetypes as well as logical ideals. These aspects work in tandem in some non-fully discovered way but are evident through the experience of the beige aspects of life. The humdrum, non profound aspects of everyday life become for the human being a source of intense misery, for it dulls the survival instinct in such a way as to produce nothing from the unconscious mind. The connection between the unconscious, and the physical world is a powerful one, and it is through dullness of being that slowly erodes our ability to truly live.

Chapter Seven

How Despair Intermingles with the Thirst for Expression.

"In the next Place, their Discourse turn'd (sic) on sensual Pleasures; and the Hermit demonstrated, that they were the Gifts of Heaven; for, said he, Man cannot bestow either Sensations or Ideas on himself; he receives them all; his Pain and Pleasure, as well as his Being, proceed from a superior Cause." – Voltaire, *Zadig; or the Book of Fate*.

The superior cause that Voltaire is referring to need not be anything further than desire itself. Desire is seen here as being the wellspring of all sentient gifts that mankind has received through awareness. Whether we experience pain, pleasure, sensations, and ideas, each of these aspects of consciousness work in tandem with one another to create the illusion of the fullness of man. The superior cause is something that is beyond our comprehension, because it is the theoretical organization of all our thoughts, ideals, and dream-like states. What this essence *is* remains wholly unknown to us because it could simply be an additional tool that is used for survival in the primitive brain of mankind.

Ideas spring forth from conscious awareness of those things which once resided in the unconscious mind. Shapes, sounds, sensations, and the like all have representations in the subconsciousness of man, and woman. Our primitive state of survivalism prevents us from making the connection between the unconscious, and conscious mind, but reason, and logic provide the keys to understanding each one of these aspects. All we know is that we are destined to come to grips with the conflicts that exist within us. These conflicts have a constant hold on humanity, in that they are represented by the visions of the primitive mind, as well as the logician's reasoning.

Freedom is found through the principle that ideals are part of a higher cause. This is not necessarily tied in with any recognition of a deity, nor by extension is it encouraging of the mythological or abstract. What this does imply is that there is something that dwells within the mind of

mankind that is not fully understood because it rests between the active, and liminal states of being. To clarify, I mean that within the deepest aspects of the survival instinct, and the death drive, lie the source of desire whereby all things come to pass in the causal world.

The acausal affects the causal here in the sense that thoughts, ideas, and dream-like states are all cohesive with one another in their influence of the possibility of actions that might take place. The uncreated touches the created in a way that is only possible through pure sentience. What happens to this sentience when biological functions cease to exist? That is unknown. What is known is that our sentience, tied as it is to our physical nature, influences the outside world in subtle, as well as overt ways.

We must see those aspects of biology which describe the function, and form of the brain to have some clue as to the nature of some of these manifestations of the mind. The superior cause, here, is some form of primitive life-essence that is connected to desire in an inextricable way. This is not a mystical explanation for why we receive sensations, and ideas; this is a logical steppingstone into the unknown through reasoning. The primitive life essence is based on the very form of desire which allows for actions to take place, and the will to be simultaneously fulfilled.

For us to experience freedom through the liberating aspects of the will, we must recognize the existence of some superior cause. This does not imply, once again, any sort of mythological or abstract form of reasoning. What I mean is that the superior cause can be biological, as well as mental, in some way. When we follow the natural course of where desire stems from, we see that it too has a guide from whence it may express itself more fully. This guide is found within our unconscious primitive state of being which is very difficult to tap into, but entirely possible through concerted effort.

When we are in the throes of despair, we become psychologically naked, and severely aware of our exposure to the elements of the outside world. We have an acute awareness of the science behind how our bodies

function, and the brainwaves we display on highly technological equipment. None of this makes much of a difference to the individual who is in the state of experiencing non-existence through personal crises. When we realize the depths of our existential threats against personal liberty, we are unable to even cry out into the void because of the heaviness of this revelation.

The superior cause for all experience is hidden in the strength of desire found in the consciousness of all mankind. This desire is all-consuming in that there is constant striving that is unknown by the individual because it is so primal to our nature. Our inner resources for survival are under constant attack by the death impulse, and vice versa. This is but one source of the many conflicting elements of consciousness we are forced to contend with.

As we develop over the years a sense of personality which is informed by the various environmental conditions we are subjected to, our expression of the will becomes more nuanced, and filled with the urgency of the brevity of time.

In the brevity of time, all things appear to be confusing to some degree. Scientific knowledge is clear, but there are many things which are yet unknown. Neurological studies, microbiological breakthroughs, and the various other physical (or medical) sciences are continuously pushing the boundaries of our physiological knowledge through advancements in what our nature consists of.

None of these answer the fundamentally subjective experience of what it is like to feel that one is without purpose. We pathologize existential aspects of the human condition in a way that perhaps overlaps actual illness with genuine despair over the condition of the world. The universe around us makes mathematical sense, but it is lacking in purpose beyond simple utility.

Our recognition of the importance of creating meaningful ideologies through the manifestation of the will permits us to experience a nuanced

understanding of life bereft of mythology. We are at a cultural crossroads whereby there is a spirit of questioning regarding traditional belief systems. A great deal of internal dialogue is necessary for there to be an honest look at the various possibilities extant within the limits of individual will. To clarify, I am stating that our psychological evolution has moved past traditional belief systems which hinder the consciousness of the individual from expressing the fullness of desire.

Traditional belief systems, religion notwithstanding, provide simplified answers for questions which do not have readily available answers. There is a profound thirst within all of mankind to seek out the purpose of how the will interacts with the insatiable desire of primitive instinct.

Despair is an attribute native to the human condition. Throughout history, there has been a continual struggle of conflict that exists on all sides of the human experience. There is the struggle to survive versus to die. We also experience the struggle of ideology versus the expression of the will. Ideologies struggle against one another in a never-ending battle that has no end in sight. All these factors combine to create an atmosphere of chaos which is part, and parcel of the human condition.

When we examine these factors for what they are; manifestations of the fundamental nature of humanity, we can conclude that sentience brings with it a series of oppositions that are inevitable. The will is connected intrinsically with the manifestation of desire, which in turn is influenced by the subconscious mind. Even in our subconsciousness we are conflicted by ideals, thoughts, dreams, and passing imagery dealing with the desire to be free. The contrast between what we experience in our daily lives versus what is visible to us in our ideals of freedom creates an atmosphere of pure despair.

The great philosopher Peter Wessel Zapffe, in his monumentally important work *The Last Messiah*, describes the vacuity that exists between all earthly creatures. For Zapffe, "The tragedy of a species becoming unfit

for life by over evolving one ability is not confined to humankind. Thus, it is thought, for instance, that certain deer in paleontological times succumbed as they acquired overly heavy horns. The mutations must be considered blind, they work, are thrown forth, without any contact of interest with their environment. In depressive states, the mind may be seen in the image of such an antler, in all its fantastic splendour pinning its bearer to the ground."

The depressive states with which we are all at one point thrown into resonate with the ontological despair we experience in our every waking moment. When we enter these states, we are profoundly impacted by their significance because these things influence the expression of what pitiful levels of free will we possess at any given time. In those moments, we suddenly become aware of the magnitude of our suffering as sentient beings.

Our sentience is an example of an overly evolved state that encapsulates what it means to be human. We observe in all living beings a degree of despair that is mirrored from within ourselves. As we journey through this life, the closer we become cognizant of our eventual deaths, the more we sense this overly evolved state. Some of us experience this from quite an early age, which is both fortunate, and unfortunate simultaneously. It is fortunate for there are few deceptions that can come in the way of the advancement of the liberation of the will through intense desire. On the other hand, it is unfortunate for it ages us tremendously before our assigned time through old age. However, as the realization of our predicament takes place, it is certain that it will be a homogenous one that all human beings experience at some point.

When we recognize that our thirst for freedom has evolved in us through some archaic mutation of cognizance, we come to terms with our mortality. As we progress past the point of this recognition, we are amid a great inner change that cannot be returned from. This is all a part of the individual's journey to reclaim a sense of liberty which was perhaps never

fully there. In this journey, we are linked together by a similarity of struggles which influences our very being.

Zapffe had a profound vision of how collectively we are continuously looking for some form of redemption. This redemption seems as if it will never come, and will be announced by mankind someday when all biological instinct has mitigated through augmentation. To Zapffe, individuals are ripe for a new messiah, and the message will be dolorous. Zapffe declared somewhat mystically that "If we continue these considerations to the bitter end, then the conclusion is not in doubt. As long as humankind recklessly proceeds in the fateful delusion of being biologically fated for triumph, nothing essential will change. As its numbers mount and the spiritual atmosphere thickens, the techniques of protection must assume an increasingly brutal character. And humans will persist in dreaming of salvation and affirmation and a new Messiah. Yet when many saviours have been nailed to trees and stoned on the city squares, then the last Messiah shall come."

The message of the last messiah is not one of hope but one of extinction. This extinction is the culmination of all unexperienced desires found within the presence of the will of numberless individuals. To Zapffe, true freedom is found in the presence of living peacefully unto death without recourse to biological progeny. Self-awareness is key here, because there must be a means for us to express what little strength of will we have unto death. It is here in this aspect that meaning is constructed, rather than received from some nebulous source such as a book, or mystical icon. The very essence of suffering, whether it be physical or of a mental nature, precedes the true knowledge we gain when we see life for what it is, a cage match unto death.

"Then will appear the man who, as the first of all, has dared strip his soul naked and submit it alive to the outmost thought of the lineage, the very idea of doom. A man who has fathomed life and its cosmic ground, and whose pain is the Earth's collective pain." – Peter Wessel Zapffe, *The Last Messiah.*

Human beings have an eventual state whereby there will be no fantastical dogmatic ideals to follow logically. The only reality will be cold mathematics, scientific facts, and logical outcomes. Internally there will be a great battle that will not be satiated until death comes for each one of us. This internal battle is, once again, a part of a larger conflict which is the bane of the human condition. That there is life, and death is a bare minimum fact. The concept of a liberated will conflicts with those chains of slavery we are inevitably born into. Zapffe knew this concept, and took it to the logical end, which is of the realization that all humanity will eventually collapse upon itself by the weight of the grim truth of life.

We can distract ourselves in many ways, but none of them will be sufficient to quell that inner nagging voice within each one of us that demands to know the truth behind the matter. Life itself is a complex series of situational aspects that present themselves to us in what appears to be random timetables. There is an order, of course, behind all this chaos but none of that order seems to answer internal questions regarding existence. What it is like to be, and to be truly liberated, are concepts that are exceedingly above our current understanding beyond the ever-evolving conceptualizations of science.

We can visualize the phenomenon behind the brain through functional magnetic resonance imaging, as well as commit ourselves to the academic rigors of continual testing of this technology through research papers, but we are still missing pieces to a seemingly gargantuan puzzle. What is it like to despair? Is it merely a phenomenon of the brain which has some form of primitive survival context to it? And why is it connected as it is to the function of desire within the conscious mind? These are questions which are fundamental to this research, and must be accounted for in order for there to be any headway in our existential conundrum.

To reach a maturity of thought, it is necessary to admit our kinship with all creation. All that exists is sighing under a collective sensation of despair. The more sentience one possesses, the clearer it becomes that there are vistas of knowledge that were not meant for the eyes of man. This

is also a subject which deals with the fact that we cannot fully understand the limits of our will through the desire we project onto the outside world. Our desires are far outnumbered by the countless chaotic measures that the universe takes against our illusions of freedom. Therefore, the will is never satiated in the least.

The outside world, with all the flora, and fauna that exists, is a part of the misery that we experience through our lack of strength of the will. Organisms live, thrive, and die, and so do we, but there is this nagging voice in the back of each of our heads conniving against our better nature. This is not to say that sentience is all bad, it is just another source of conflict for the expression of the will.

In our seemingly eternal slavery (which is temporal as far as we know) we are cast against the murkiness of an ocean of time, knowledge, and decisions that can only be chosen if the opportunity arises for us. This is part, and parcel, of the great mystery of life, for the extent of just how lost we truly are is not fathomable to our current technical understanding of how things work.

Though we come into this world alone, we do, according to Zapffe, have a companion for the pain we experience; and that is the Earth's. Whether this is indicative of some form of pan-sentience is beyond the scope of this book, for my intentions are simply to elucidate those mysteries that are present within the will of man, and woman. Perhaps the meaning is wholly poetical, in that the plight of mankind, being composed of the very same elements of Earth as other carbon-based life forms, shares in some manner, cosmic suffering that is unique. Perhaps we are what we are by chance, and given any other random set of circumstances other creatures than we would suffer just as we do.

Through a balanced approach to the natural want of freedom that life surrounds us with, we can better contend with the realities of such a reality. Returning to the stoicism of Seneca, we must be willing to see the world as it is with a contented mind. This does not mean that we ignore our

suffering whatsoever. What this means is that our engagement with the world is based on uncontrollable, uncertain, and chaotic realities which force us to merely observe what is happening to us in real time. We must become observers of our condition, and take internal notes along the way. Why must we do this? It is because there is no more logical way to repair those cracks in the fabric of reality which contend themselves against us as if we were in a constant state of war.

Dr. Freud makes it clear that the unconscious work of the psyche is based on our confrontation with death, the ultimate equalizer. It is through the death experience that we can connect the aspects of survival, and the desires of the will all at once. Dr. Freud implores, and states unequivocally that we should "Let us now leave primitive man and turn to the unconscious in our psyche. Here we depend entirely upon psychoanalytic investigation, the only method which reaches such depths. The question is what the attitude of our unconscious towards death is. In answer we say that it is almost like that of primitive man. In this respect, as well as in many others, the man of prehistoric times lives on, unchanged, in our conscious."

The primitive always exists within us, especially when it comes to the conceptualizations we have of the will. When we follow this train of logic, it becomes evident that there is something of a deeper force extant within the subconscious that we have yet to tap into. Perhaps self-regression through note taking on personal behaviors can assist with this, along with a professional relationship with a psychologist or therapist of note. However one chooses to solidify this relationship, it is necessary for the conflicts that appear within the unconscious, and conscious minds to resolve themselves if possible. All states of chaos exist because of these conflicts which are seemingly endless in the mind of man.

As our culture slowly opens to the idea of discussing human rights with a focus on the sanctity of the will, we find ourselves evolving further into a new direction as a species. Our ability to receive instantaneous information through the internet as well as other means allows us to be

influenced in a cosmopolitan way. What I mean by this is that we are seeing strides in self-expression that are changing decade by decade.

Conceptualizations of individuals as being more than a specific gender, grouping of talents, or as mere commodities to be sold to the highest bidder is allowing for great strides in the maximizing of the idea of personal liberties. Systems of corruption, through various governmental, and societal powers, are losing their grip on individuals in a subtle, yet palpable way. Though we are all enmeshed in the inevitable conformity that comes with living in society, our inner desires are strengthening into new aspects of expressing the will.

It is true that we will always be limited in how we are able to express our will, but this is not something that should be considered as the worst possible setback to our evolution as individuals. We must view stoically those things out of our control so that we can analyze situations more clearly to our benefit. What we can control we must seize with the utmost passion, and allow ourselves to relish the experience as being valuable in, and of itself.

The sanctity of the will is not found in any unlimited expression. This would be impossible in any state that the law of this world is able to function on. What we can view here is a sanctity of being; a focused concentration of internal desire that finds strength in the expression of inner ideals, traumas, and experiences. This juxtaposition of desire with the sanctity of the will is based on all those simultaneous conflicts with which we are forced to contend with daily. Our subjective experience as human beings forces us to gestate those ideals as close as possible to the objective world as we can make them become. This is all a part of the conflict that exists within the acausal, and the causal. The notion that there is a divide between the mind, and the physical world creates several problems aside from the expression of the will that is beyond the scope of this essay.

Regardless of our position, we must recognize the fallibility of all dogmatic thought outside of time-tested rational scientific theories. We are physiological beings with a developed sense of self-awareness, assessment,

and judgment. It is quite possible that all our theories regarding the will are false, in that it is merely a tool for survival in the most primitive sense. Still, we have no definite answer as to whether this is the case. Therefore, this conversation is so critical to understanding the human psyche, and how it relates to biological truths.

We possess automatic responses to our various states of need, and this is inclusive of hunger, sex, power, and shelter. As soon as we receive these things, unlike other animals, we seek far more in excess of these matters. But why? This is a question that has no easy answer, but there are logical routes whereby it is possible to decipher at least some of the truth of the matter. Our possession of reason, and logic allows for a deeper understanding of those primitive things our physiological nature requires (and desires).

It is through physiology that we find the answers to basic survivalist questions, but we must also investigate psychoanalytic ideas that can transform our understanding most profoundly. Without a balanced view of both aspects of science, it is impossible to fully know the extent of what the will truly consists of. We are at the apex of understanding with our advancements in technological equipment, and this is something that extends into the mental health realm as well.

Our internal desire to express our very being is what drives us to the point of occasional madness when it comes to being sentient. To be aware of one's position in the cosmic sense is frightening enough in and of itself, but it is also a catalyst for existential questioning. This questioning is crucial to understanding the basis for whence our desires spring forth from. This is because many of these desires have no basis in simple survival.

By recognizing the need to reconstruct morality to further align with our manifestation of the will, we are obliged to serve others in a way that is ever evolving. We must be willing to extend those freedoms that we value for ourselves to others we encounter in this life. This is not a moral command, but a logical outspringing of ideas which deal with the liberation

of the Will. Without the connections that we make with others throughout life it becomes impossible for us to fully express access to the will that we do have.

Others should not be seen as means to an end, because this would unnecessarily limit the freedoms that others possess. We cannot in good judgment enslave others, nor treat them with violence, because in this we become tyrants to ourselves. This is not merely a political or sociological lesson to be had, but one in which every single person alive should be cognizant of practicing daily.

There are some aspects of morality that are not tied in with the mythological, or merely socio-political. These aspects are based on the maximizing of individual liberties for no other purpose other than sacralizing the individual. All individuals have a distinct value because of the desire to commit to an action via the will. This value is neither positive, nor negative in nature, because that would be assigning some mythological basis to what is merely an observation. As we observe this nature of ours, it becomes clear that we must look upon life as if we were staring into a mirror of ourselves. Others are not simply the other, but are in some nebulous way connected to us via the primal urge to create action from desire.

This all sounds very abstract, but the premise could not be clearer; the will, and desire, are focused on aspects of humanity which are shared with one another. If we were to murder someone, we in turn are murdering a part of ourselves. This is not a cosmic declaration, but one in which I appeal to nature to sort itself out in this regard. Human nature is complex, but the appeal to equality via the utility of the will, and desire is powerful.

The illustrious philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer made many observations regarding the value of man in that we create value through our interactions with others. There is a synergy of action taking place here, whereby the individual amplifies their own access to a will which, though enslaved, is still capable of powerful action. For Schopenhauer, it is "By the

very fact that he lives and works, the man who is endowed with genius makes an entire sacrifice of himself in the interests of everyone. Accordingly, he is free from the obligation to make a particular sacrifice for individuals; and thus he can refuse many demands which others are rightly required to meet. He suffers and achieves more than all the others." This excerpt comes from the *Art of Controversy*, and stands out as being one of the most powerful statements of that piece of work.

For Schopenhauer, there is a balance of the sacrifice an individual is prepared to meet versus the freedom to choose not to do something. This aspect, for him, is indicative of a 'man of genius' because these actions are self-willed, and are in the interest in maximizing the access to self-liberation through the interactions with others. This distinction between action, and inaction is indicative of a self-willed power that cannot be taken away even in those cases where we are maximally enslaved by life. What I mean by this is that even if a possible action were not to be permitted by some outside force, it does not lose the power that it has because it stems from a deeper internal source.

In my philosophy I do not discount the ideals that run contrarian to the interaction with other people, however. To clarify, I mean that there are ways that the will can be expressed in a solitary manner bereft of any outside influences. To be outside of the mass of individuals in a self-isolating way also holds a particular value depending on the contextual situation. Though we are social animals, there comes a time when we need absolute quietude of being to experience the ideal of self-liberation. Some of the greatest works of art, literature, and self-expression have stemmed from the isolation of one individual. Nonetheless, when we look at the perspective of how we are mirrors of one another, there is a profound realization that our actions towards others are consequential, even in an individual sense when it comes to self-empowerment.

We must not forget ourselves, our purpose, and our place in the physical world while at the same time managing to cultivate our rich inner

lives. The philosopher Emil Cioran, in *A Short History of Decay*, illustrates for us in the following question, and answers:

"Sometimes we manage to forget ourselves in something; but how (sic) forget ourselves in the world itself? This impossibility is the definition of the disease. The man who is afflicted by it will never be cured, even if the universe changed altogether."

For Cioran, forgetting the world is impossible because, though we can neglect something within ourselves, the outside world continuously reminds us of where we are in the world. Our focus on the chaos surrounding us is not something that is willed, but is automatically set forth by our conscious minds. We are continuously barraged with the influx of different ideologies, thoughts, political conceptualizations, and social cues that it is no wonder why we are in such a pitiful state. Individually, our chaos extends to the inner mind, though this is much more of a nuanced manifestation of how we receive the outside world.

Philosophers like Cioran, Zapffe, and Schopenhauer knew that the world around us swirled with a sort of perpetual chaos that only externally changed with the mode of fashion as centuries pass us by. The individual always remains the same, even though there is a possibility of evolutionary thought through inner contemplation. This is where the power of the individual will comes in; the desirous being the catalyst for a greater profundity of action that comes with it an immense personal responsibility.

As the world turns around us, even the most concentrated, intellectual of minds can become distracted by the outside objective universe. Therefore, we must choose to maximize personal liberty through continual concerted effort on our own behalf. No one else in the world will do this for us, and this is certain because everyone is focused on their own inner conflict.

"It is probable that everybody who is at all a constant dreamer has had at least one experience of an event or a sequence of circumstances

which have come to his mind in sleep being subsequently realized in the material world." - E.F. Benson, *The Room in the Tower*.

Human beings have a propensity toward fantasy, as well as looking at the ordinary in such a way that it appears to have fantastical properties. This is not a setback in any way, but a regression toward those primitive expressions of fear, inquiry, and hope that continue to navigate through us in this existence. The work of E.F. Benson, particularly in his short story *The Room in the Tower*, encapsulates this propensity in such a way as to mirror what we experience in our daily lives. Horror is not something that is merely monstrous, or some deadly disease that cannot be stopped; it is nuanced. What I mean by this is that in a story such as Benson wrote, the protagonist is forced to dream the same dream over, and over again with subtle changes over time. His dream becomes one where there is no sense of freedom, as he is forced to enter the room in the tower inevitably each evening of sleep.

We are very much like Benson's unlucky protagonist because we find ourselves in a position where we eventually realize that though we can make various changes to the outside world, we are ultimately at the mercy of circumstances beyond our control. This is where the true horror of existence begins because it stems from a realization in the individual that cannot be taught adequately in schools, or systems of education whatsoever. This is a crisis of existence that demands some form of theory, or answer to those questions that have chained us against a virtual wall of ignorance.

Our situation, which is one of despair, does not dim the light that comes from our expression of personal liberty. For it is through liberty alone that we can make strides that help change the tide of history, however limited that might be. In the result, we are never to be freed from our situation as slaves to circumstance, but we can control our minds.

Chapter Eight

Interactivity, and Desire as Fundamental Motivators.

"I have had the opportunity of observing certain cases of neuroses of years' duration, in which, at the time of the beginning of the illness or shortly before, a dream occurred, often of visionary clarity. This impressed itself inextinguishably upon the memory, and in analysis revealed a hidden meaning to the patient which anticipated the subsequent events of life; that is to say, their psychologic meaning." – C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious.*

The interactivity between the conscious, and unconscious mind allows us to solidify the desire that makes the will capable of action. The strange neuroses that we carry with us have a meaning, because they are solidified in us in such a way that they stay with us for a lifetime. Life can be seen as a series of illnesses, of which we recover but are never the same. For Dr. Jung, the psychological meaning behind neuroses carries over to seemingly non-related events that challenge the individual based on their own histories.

We carry with us wounds that are imperceptible to the human eye because they are based on unconscious experiences that have been sublimated into the very core of our being. These wounds are figurative, but they are no less real to the individual. They may not be able to be seen, but there are very real scars that are internalized in such a way as to affect the purpose and ferocity of desire in the individual.

The will is purposeful in that it is based on a sequence of events that happen in the mind of the individual. First, there is a vision, or idea that strikes one as being profoundly obsessive in nature. Secondly, the unconsciousness of an individual links itself to the conscious awareness; thus, creating a means for desire to take place. Thirdly, desire awakens the urgency toward action that naturally follows.

The unconscious mind is so powerful that we can become wounded through our own perceived slights that may or may not have a place in objective reality. Those things which we perceive are based on actual interactions that are internalized in such a way that no one person shares the same experience, though there are superficial similarities. Dr. Jung knew this and understood that the nature of suffering is largely internal. He elucidates this truth for us in the Psychology of the Unconscious, specifically dealing with internal states. For Jung, "The wounding and painful arrows do not come from without through gossip, which only attacks externally, but they come from ambush, from our own unconscious. This, rather than anything external, creates the defenseless suffering. It is our own repressed and unrecognized desires which fester like arrows in our flesh."

The 'arrows' that remain within us are memories, actions, ideals, thoughts, and patterns of reaction that are tremendously focused on individual experience. Each of us is a world unto ourselves, and this is evidenced by how we interpret circumstances unique to our situations. The will is affected by this, because it is at the mercy of that chain of action, and reaction, that begins with the internalized dream-state.

Though we are necessarily tied with the objective due to our ability to visualize experiences in an abstract way, we are no different than someone who is blind and cannot see the objective world. What I mean by this is that our desire, though somehow tied in with the senses we possess, is so primal that it does not require the fullness of objective experience to express itself.

Nonetheless, all things have a reactionary status when it comes to the expression of human emotions. Everything begins in the unconscious mind, and this is so because every thought we possess stems from a very individualistic origin. This origin is part, and parcel of the unknown, in that it has not fully been deciphered by scientific means yet.

When we are confronted with the necessity of molding the will based on our station in life, we can help influence society on an individual level. To clarify, I mean that if we are more aware of our true will, our primal desire, if you will, then we can act in ways that influence the course of history even if it is on a small scale. A good example of this is how we utilize our will to care for someone who is sick, or who needs advice. Simple things create larger waves of influence throughout the world, and the will is powerful enough to demonstrate this adequately.

Our place in this realm, though it is somewhat stagnant (with exceptions) is evidence enough of the power of our enslavement in the objective world. We are like shards of glass from an elegant mirror that is made to reflect only part of the truth as can be seen. There is a puzzle here, whereby each theoretical shard of glass with its own uniqueness finds a way to unite with other pieces in such a way as to create a unique life narrative. This narrative is as unique as all things are when it comes to subjective experience.

The subjective, in its nascent state, is part of the acausal or uncreated psychological phenomenon. There are still principles to be followed when dealing with such a subject, and I will tread lightly regarding them. The will, being a part of a larger cascade of states (or aspects) manifests itself through those inner dreams that project themselves as if they were on a cinematic screen in our minds. I recall the Allegory of the Cave by Plato here from his work in the *Republic*, where we can only imagine what reality is through what we see.

In any station of life, it is necessary to consider the unconscious reflections of ideas that take place continuously as we move along our daily business. This is a form of conditional morality that requires a series of inner dialogues to qualify any given possible action of the will through desire. When these conditions are met, action can (potentially) take place, and the irreversibility of those actions can cause a ripple effect in the objective world.

In *Utilitarianism* by John Stuart Mill, the author both questions, and answers from whence morality springs forth. For Mill, standards are adopted through an individual, whereby there is a solidification of acceptable action towards others. Mill opens with a series of questions before answering using the fulcrum of reasoning: "The question is often asked, and properly so, in regard to any supposed moral standard—What is its sanction? what are the motives to obey it? or more specifically, what is the source of its obligation? whence does it derive its binding force? It is a necessary part of moral philosophy to provide the answer to this question, which, though frequently assuming the shape of an objection to the utilitarian morality, as if it had some special applicability to that above others, really arises in regard to all standards. It arises, in fact, whenever a person is called on to adopt a standard or refer morality to any basis on which he has not been accustomed to rest it."

We must apply our own standards to those of others that exist in this world because it is a primitive agreement to honor those aspects of the will that are indeed free. It is an unspoken delegation of rights that begins with the rationalization that the freedom to *be* has become the height of the sacrality of human existence. This sacrality cannot be confused with any belief that we are somehow above other creatures on the Earth. It is a matter of being a pact of sorts with the self (that is created through experience) that allows for there to be a lessening of the suffering caused by sentience.

Within sentience we realize the level of actual enslavement we have become accustomed to in our lives. The will is connected to this sentience by reason of desire, which itself springs from the unconscious mind. To make matters more confusing, there is a conflict at every level that determines whether we live, or die. By this I mean the will to live, and the death drive of a primitive nature. This primitive nature is a mirror-like state with the chaos that is demonstrated by the objective world around us. We are in a state of microcosm, versus macrocosm on every possible level. To clarify, I mean that all conflict is both causal, and acausal.

Behold how they beckon, those years, long expired, From Heaven, in faded apparel attired, How Regret, smiling, foams on the waters like yeast; Its arches of slumber the dying sun spreads, And like a long winding-sheet dragged to the East, Oh, hearken Beloved, how the Night softly treads!" – *The Flowers of Evil*, Charles Baudelaire.

This poem by Charles Baudelaire is a perfect example of how, through our regretful actions, we still slumber through this life as if we were already dead. Not being aware of the will, desire, or the unconscious can place us in such a state because of the notion that all things we record in our minds do not bother us until the time is too late. This is not to say that most people are in this state, but perhaps there are many who are. After all, *why* would Baudelaire write of regret if it were not an all-too-common thing even in his day?

But it is not just regret that makes us spring forth with enthusiasm toward the expression of the will; it is the lure of possibilities. The sentient mind requires possibilities because without them life would be tremendously depressing (beyond the suffering we all inevitably experience in some form). We must tread carefully in life because if we do not look toward the will as a sacred manifestation of personal agency, we may not be able to say we lived a life worth living.

We psychologically blanket ourselves with the winding sheets of a living death through ignoring the will, shattered though it is. When the pieces of the puzzle comes together, we are made whole. This is of course, not a possibility because like shattered glass we are all reflecting on the same thing in an impossibly different way. Nonetheless, it is necessary for us to utilize logic, and reason, and focus on how we can reflect the objective world to our advantage.

One way in doing so is to remember that all ideals, thoughts, dreams, and actions stem from the unconscious psychological states. These states are continuously influencing us from the acausal, into the causal realities of objectivity.

Conclusions can now be reached regarding interactions of the individual and the re-creation of new moral concepts surrounding the will as a limited force. It is logical to surmise that the will is an extension of desire, for it is a cascading series of manifestations that eventually ends up in action (or inaction). Whether we do act on some desirous impulse, it becomes an example of the liberation of the individual at work. Liberty in this sense does not mean unconditional freedom, for as I have explained, we are always at the mercy of situations, contexts, and scenarios as varied as the human race itself.

There are parasitic relationships that exist between individuals, and society. These relationships are highly informed by the mimicry between each other on a primitive level. What I mean by this is that society acts in ways that are conformist in order to survive. Internally we all have our own individual world that serves to solidify who we are as individuals. This internal world keeps us from losing our minds at the prospect of the degree of enslavement we are forced into. It is through the creative that we settle on art rather than war, though at times the latter occurs all too frequently.

Society does not seem to understand the full import of death in terms of the expression of the will in the living. It is seen as some vague rite of passage through life, but it is hardly given the attention it deserves regarding the usefulness of the will. The will demands constant appeasement through action, and does not provide time for there to be any hesitation on behalf of the individual.

We must be willing to interact consciously with the subjective, as well as our objective rational minds. The acausal, and causal, are both in effect here, and remain so throughout our lives as a continual synergetic cause/reaction situation. The studies of psychoanalysis, neuroscience, as well as the physical sciences all have a strong place here in the deciphering of the power of the will. Research must continue along the trajectory it is on for there to be any meaningful breakthroughs in understanding the intertwined nature of desire, and the will. The unconscious here plays a strong role in helping to answer these puzzling questions.

The self is continuously changing, as previously mentioned, through life experiences. We are not stagnant by any means. It is true that we do mature, change, and become entirely different people throughout time. The expression of the will is important to this because it is based on continual change, as well as possibilities. Possibilities here are in reference to those things which may come to pass through machinations of what the individual sets forth to do.

Society is foundationless without the conceptualizations of utility toward other individuals in an egalitarian way. This is demonstrable due to the deference we place on ourselves when it comes to our individual rights. When we act upon something that affects another human being, we are acting upon ourselves as well. This is for 'good' or 'bad' either way.

Logic informs us of our ability to perceive the will in a way that is tangible to us on an individual level. Though we may never fully penetrate the substance of the unconscious mind through the acausal 'nature' of dream-like states, we can attempt to understand it better for ourselves through reflection.

We must look at those inner wounds in our psychological makeup, and cultivate awareness of just how profoundly these diseases affect our relationship to the outside world. These diseases are not physiological in the sense that they are connected to some physical organ. These are diseases of the mind, which are no less real. The will, shattered as it is, must continuously be propelled forward by the desire inherent in man, and woman.

The will is not completely free, nor is it fully enslaved to the outside objective world around us. We exist in a strange state of continual conflict between life, death, choice, and decision making. As previously mentioned, it is as if we were broken glass originating from the most ornate mirror imaginable. We can reflect what gazes into us, and if it be ourselves that does that gazing, we can enter a new state of individual awareness of self-agency.

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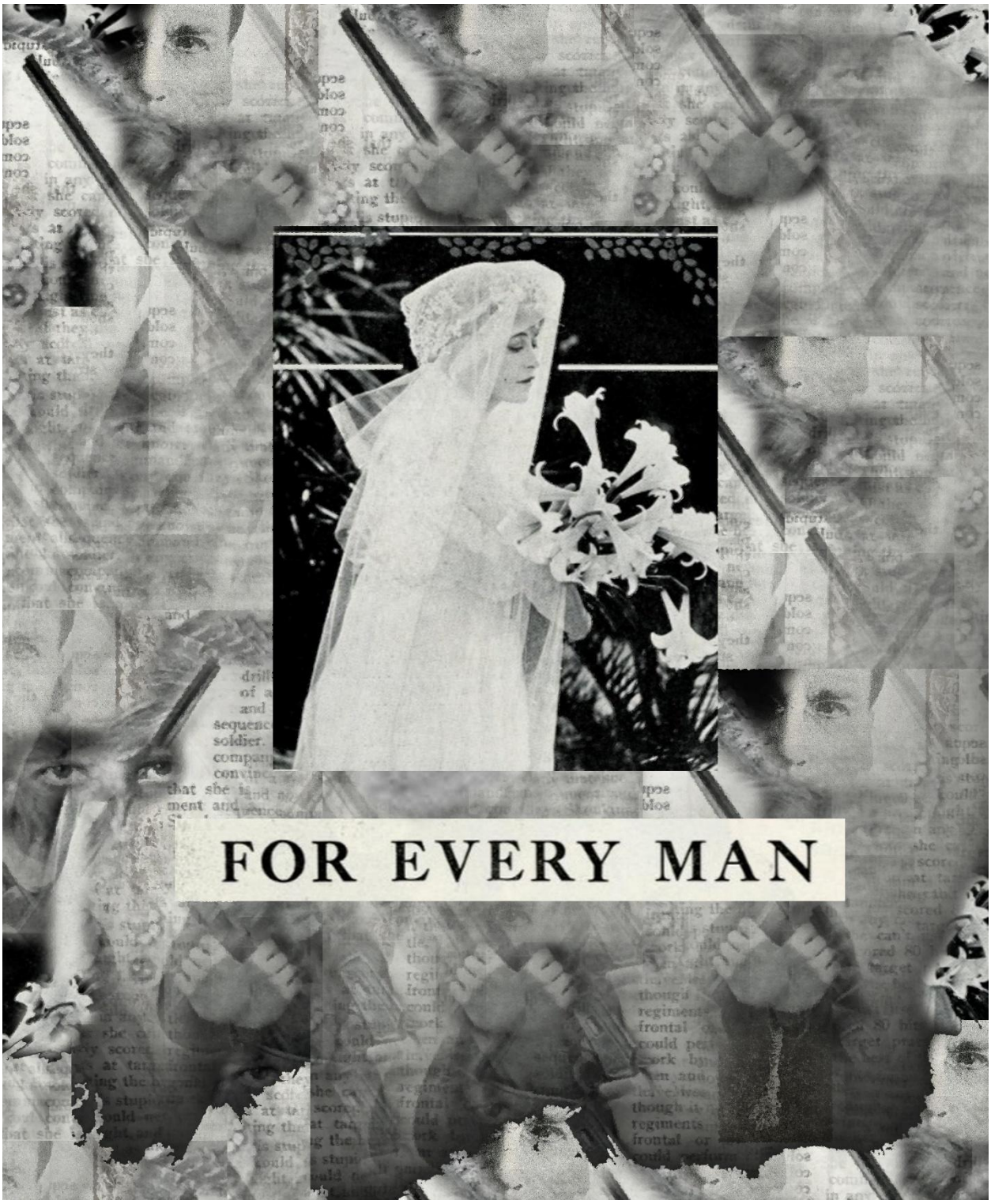
FOR EVERY MAN

Glossary

Acausal – That which is uncreated. There is no description for this non-state.

Being (ontological sense) – Embodiment of the mind in the physical world.

Causal – All things physically extant in this world.

Collective consciousness – Our awareness as a group, and a species. This consciousness is fundamental with all things on some pattern-based level.

Conceptualization – The creation of ideas, formulations of thought patterns, and plans which are often complex in nature. It is more than *umbra et imago*; it is driven by the *Will*.

Condemnation to being – The reality that we are all condemned to existence through suffering. See the Shared suffering of sentience definition for more information.

Consciousness – See self-awareness.

Cult of youth – A concept which is continuously unfolding before our eyes. The worship of youth over age, and inexperience over clarity through the implementation of death-denial.

Death Impulse – A force, namely that which is of self-destruction, which is within all of us on a primitive level.

Dichotomies – Stark differences, sharp contrasts, and punctures in reality through which ideas are formed that are incompatible with one another.

Ephemeral Self – The illusory self which does not reflect the objective truth on a micro, or macro scale.

Inner truth – A form of non-deceptive awareness of biological systems, and theoretical concepts relating to self-development. The ability to continually reinvent oneself through improvements on cognitive, psychological, and physical levels.

Liminal spaces – Between life, and death. Those spaces which cannot be calculated or geometrically designed. That which is outside of the angles of geometry that we are aware of. This is close to the sleep-state without dreaming.

Non-being – The uncreated essence. The separation of recognized patterns into unrecognizable particulates.

Representation – This is on a psychological, and phenomenal level simultaneously. What we see before us depends on our own perception of things.

Self-Annihilation – Mental in nature, not physical. A symbolic death.

Self-awareness – Being cognizant of one's own mind, and individuality within the scope of the outside world.

Subjectivity / Objectivity – The subjective is tied here to that which is symbolic, and inward-facing. The objective is focused on universality.

Sentience – Consciousness, awareness.

Shared suffering of sentience – Here the meaning deals with an ecumenical experience of suffering which is experienced by all creatures that think.

Symbolism / symbolic mind – That which is beyond description in language. Pictures make more sense here. Nonetheless, it is that which is in our primitive recesses of joy, fear, and hope. It is art but without expressed meaning in the sense that language has already failed.

Unconscious / unconscious mind – That which is perpetually of the dreaming state. Symbolism rules here. It is where we find ourselves closest to our true nature.

Will – That which is born of desire, forged in the crucible of our flesh, and made apparent through focused action, or calls to action.

Will toward Survival – That which drives us to thrive individually, and collectively.

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Biography

Thomas Sheldon MacDonald is the author of fifteen books largely dealing with philosophy, poetics, and surrealism. He is a graduate of Miami Dade College, and is continually pursuing knowledge through education as well as independent study. His philosophy is focused on concepts of non-being through processing internal experiences in a rational way. Thomas grew up in Attleboro, Massachusetts, where he is currently residing. When not studying assiduously, Thomas enjoys the time spent with his loved ones whenever possible.

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Thomas Sheldon MacDonald.